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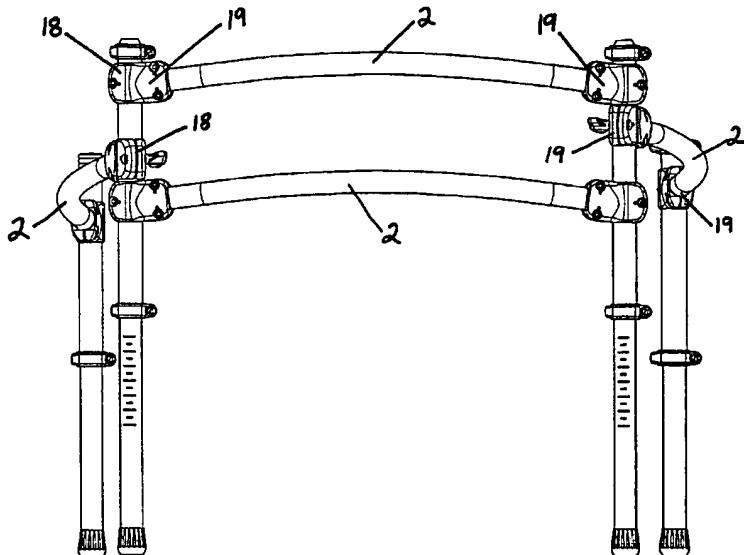
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(54) Title: INSTRUMENT SUPPORT METHODS AND APPARATUS



(57) Abstract: At least one embodiment of the inventive technology may be a support apparatus that includes at least two item support rails supported by support legs coupled thereto by pivot coupler apparatus that enable rotatable motion of a coupled support rail about a substantially vertical axis, where at least one of the item support rails is a non-horizontal item support rail. In certain embodiments, the couplers may be height adjust couplers that enable substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of coupled support rails and/or the couplers may couple item support rails to rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees. Items that may be supported include but are not limited to percussion instruments.

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INSTRUMENT SUPPORT METHODS AND APPARATUS

This is an international application that claims benefit of and priority to United States Provisional Application, 60/536,791, filed January 14, 2004, incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The technical field to which embodiments of the inventive technology relate is item support. Specific embodiments relate to support of instruments, including musical instruments such as percussion instruments.

DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

Generally, the inventive technology disclosed herein relates to a novel and useful stand for the support of items including but not limited to percussion instruments that might be found as part of a drum set. More specifically, an aspect of the inventive technology may involve instrument stands which use legs to support one or more rails to which items such as percussion instruments can be attached, where at least a portion of one or more of these rails is higher in elevation than the remaining portion of that rail, and where there is provided vertical axis pivot capability of one or more of the rails. This vertical axis may be defined by certain leg supports which themselves may be vertical so as to provide optimal support.

BACKGROUND

Some considerations relative to the use of percussion instrument support racks will be discussed to facilitate an understanding of the relevant technology. Typically, a percussion instrument support rack (a type of item support rack) will include rails and legs that support the rails. The rails themselves, which may have in other descriptions been referred to as tiers, may serve as attachment sites and provide support for percussion instruments (whether directly in the case where the percussion instrument is attached directly to the rail, or indirectly in the case where a riser or other attachment structure is attached to the rail and a percussion instrument is attached to the riser). Sometimes it may be appropriate to position all instruments at substantially the same height, but more often

tradition or practicality requires placement of several instruments at varying heights above the supporting base (e.g., a floor). Most specifically in the case of percussion instruments, it is traditional as well as practically desirable to position the instruments so that they collectively follow first a rising sweep from left to center left and then smoothly transition
5 or arch at center to a falling sweep from center right to right, allowing the user to play ascending and descending percussion patterns with ease. Of course, the terms center, left and right are with respect to a user of the instruments (e.g., a drummer), where center could be essentially that position that the user would face in assuming a position in preparation to use all the instruments. Other preferred placements of instruments might
10 call for a variation or even a reversal of this sweep of instruments or might require a more abrupt change from a rising to a falling rail axis.

Another desirable function or attribute or characteristic of multi-railed instrument stands that at least partially surround a player is the ability to be adjusted for radial
15 distance from the user. Since the stand partially surrounds the user, merely moving the stand closer to or farther away from the user in a single direction will result in an off-center user position, which is often detrimental to good instrument access in other directions. Thus it may be important in some applications that the radius of the arc approximated by the rail array (as projected on a horizontal plane), or a portion of that arc,
20 be adjustable. It should also be noted that the commonly practiced placement of larger percussion instruments on one side of the user and smaller instruments on the other side of the user might require that the rail array more closely approximate (again, in its projection onto a horizontal plane) a segment of a spiral of expanding radius in order to maintain a more constant distance between the user and the inner edge of the supported instruments.
25 Such a use may require that the relative horizontal angle of an outer rail to its adjacent inner rail be different for the left outer rail than for the right outer rail.

In providing or establishing pivot axes for radial or spiral horizontal rail array adjustment, it is important to understand the effects of non-verticality of the pivot axes. If
30 such a pivot axis is not vertical, an outer rail end, while being pivoted about this axis, does not move in a horizontal arc, and thus the height of at least a portion of it changes simultaneously as its angular position (relative to another rail attached to it, e.g.) changes. Such pivoting may raise or lower any leg attached to the rail under adjustment (e.g., to the outer end of the rail). In cases where the total number of legs is greater than three, this
35 height change will result in a detrimental condition of non-coplanarity of the several legs'

lower ends (feet) – the legs will no longer all contact the floor and will require significant additional adjustments to bring all feet back into contact with the floor. Additionally, this height change and/or the secondary adjustments needed to compensate for it can result in unintentional vertical tilting of the rail array (e.g., tilting in towards or out from a drummer seated in the center of the array), which may require yet more adjustment to correct. For these and perhaps other reasons, it may be desirable to provide and maintain vertical pivot axes for the inner ends of outer rails.

Yet another desirable function of instrument support racks may be the directing of cables (e.g., powering or signal cables in the case where supported instruments are electronic drums) through an interior space defined by (e.g., within) a rail, from one point on the rail to another, e.g., from an end of the rail to the other, or from one end of a rail to a termination point or a point of ingress or egress at an intermediate location along the rail or rail span (as but a few examples). In this way signal and/or power cables associated with supported instruments can be hidden from view for a portion of their length, improving the stand's appearance and reducing tangling and snagging of cables during use, transport or storage.

Where a hollow member (e.g., a tube) is used as a rail, it is of course possible to create holes or ports in the rail sidewall at both ends of the rail, through which cables can pass. However, this practice requires a costly secondary aperture operation (e.g., drilling) to be performed at each end of the rail, and may require the use of a costly junction box or grommet or baffle to make the holes visually acceptable and/or noninjurious to the cables. Further, it may reduce the length of the portion of the rail to which instruments can be attached. Additionally, by removing load-carrying material from the rail, holes in the rail sidewalls create stress risers, compromising the rail's mechanical structure at the very locations at which it may need to be strongest - the end joints.

One might also wish to consider the use of holes in the legs for passing cables out the end opening of one rail and into the end opening of the next rail without exiting the stand structure. But a little thought shows the difficulty this practice would create with respect to rail horizontal angle adjustment or collapse for transport or vertical rail end height adjustment, as any of these may cause a shearing action between the rail end and edges of the hole in the leg which could cause cables to be cut, damaged, or at least stressed. Further, once again a structural member, in this case the leg, would have its

strength and stiffness compromised by a major interruption in its load-bearing structure.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- 5 In the following descriptions, the terms rear and front are intended relative to a user of the apparatus. Thus, a front view would show the front of a user of the apparatus, if that user were shown in the figure.

- 10 Fig. 1a shows a plan view of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus in a fully extended configuration.

Fig. 1b(1) shows a side view of a coupler designed to retain an arm to which may be attached a riser or instrument.

- 15 Fig. 1b(2) shows a side view of an embodiment of two inventive coupler apparatus.

Fig. 1b(3) shows a side view of a foot of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus.

- 20 Fig. 1c shows a side view of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus having two center support tiers and in fully extended configuration.

Fig. 2 shows front view of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus in a typical set-up (deployed) configuration.

25

Fig. 3 shows a side view of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus in a typical set-up configuration.

- 30 Fig. 4 shows perspective front views of an embodiment of two inventive support apparatus in a typical set-up configuration..

Fig. 5 shows a side view of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus with risers attached thereto and in a typical set-up configuration.

Fig. 6 shows a perspective aerial view of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus with risers attached thereto and in a typical set-up configuration.

Fig. 7 shows a perspective aerial view of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus in a typical set-up configuration.

Fig. 8 shows a front view of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus in a typical set-up configuration, and with risers attached thereto and instruments attached to some of the risers.

10

Fig. 9 shows a photograph of an embodiment of the inventive support apparatus in a typical set-up configuration with percussion instruments attached either directly to tiers or to risers that are attached directly to tiers.

15 Fig. 10 shows an exploded view of an embodiment of the inventive coupler apparatus.

Fig. 11 shows an embodiment of compression elements that form parts of the inventive coupler apparatus.

20 Fig. 12a and 12c show views of the inside of an embodiment of one of the compression elements, in addition to cables established against it.

Fig. 12b shows an embodiment of a coupler apparatus (in addition to a cutaway view of cables passing therethrough) as viewed from where a riser that would be retained by it 25 would be established.

Fig. 13 shows a perspective view of two compression elements of the inventive coupler apparatus established in an oppositely facing orientation.

30 Fig. 14 shows a view of part of a rail support leg and of a coupler apparatus (in addition to a cutaway view of cables passing therethrough) as viewed from where a riser that would be retained by it would be established.

Fig. 15 shows a view of a portion of a rail support leg, an item support rail, and one of the 35 compression elements of an embodiment of the coupler apparatus that couples the rail

support leg to the item support rail, in addition to cables passing therethrough.

MODES FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

5 As mentioned above, the present inventive technology includes a variety of aspects, which may be combined in different ways. The following descriptions are provided to list elements and describe some of the embodiments of the present inventive technology. These elements are listed with initial embodiments, however it should be understood that they may be combined in any manner and in any number to create
10 additional embodiments. The variously described examples and preferred embodiments should not be construed to limit the present inventive technology to only the explicitly described systems, techniques, and applications. Further, this description should further be understood to support and encompass descriptions and claims of all the various embodiments, systems, techniques, methods, devices, and applications with any number of
15 the disclosed elements, with each element alone, and also with any and all various permutations and combinations of all elements in this or any subsequent application.

Figures 1 – 8 show support apparatus 1 in accordance with embodiments of the inventive technology. The embodiments covered by the claims are not limited to the
20 embodiments shown in the figures. The figures show item support rails 2 (e.g., musical instrument support rails, such as percussion instrument support rails 4) and rail support legs 5 coupled to these support rails by couplers 6 (also referred to as coupler apparatus).

In embodiments shown, the rail support legs have lower ends 7 adapted to rest on a
25 lower supporting surface (e.g., a floor, such as a stage floor). Further, after disattachment of any risers 8 and instruments 9 that may be attached directly to the apparatus or risers, the support apparatus may be collapsible such that in its collapsed configuration it occupies a smaller volume. It is of note that the instruments may be attached to the risers or the rails by instrument attachment devices.
30

An item support rail 2 (again, a broad term that includes, inter alia, a percussion instrument support rail 4) is typically an elongated member (e.g., a tube or pipe or bar, whether hollow or not), may exhibit any of several cross-sections (e.g., circular, oval, polygonal, hexagonal, rectangular, non-circular annular, and/or square, whether referring
35 to the outer surface of a non-hollow member or a hollow member, as but a few examples),

and may be straight or curved (which includes curved in some sections and straight in other(s)). A support rail may curve outward as in Fig. 2. For purposes of clarity of description, item support rails may be described as having a left end and a right end, where such nomenclature is relative to a user of the apparatus of which the rails form a part (e.g.,
5 a seated drummer at least partially surrounded by the drum set rack). Where there are more than two item support rails in a single apparatus, the outer rails 10 (e.g., the furthest left and the furthest right) may be referred to as peripheral item support rails, while the other rail(s) may be referred to as center item support rail(s) 12.

10 It should be understood that an item support rail 2 which, in an installation configuration (e.g., when the support apparatus is set up as intended, on a horizontal lower surface), has any portion which is at an elevation that is different from that of a remaining portion of that rail is a non-horizontal item support rail 11 (n.b., the term non-horizontal as used in this term modifies the rail, not the item). A non-horizontal rail, as defined herein,
15 may be, e.g., curved, straight, stepped (even with horizontal sections) or exhibit a combination of two or more of these characteristics. It should be pointed out that a non-horizontal rail can have ends substantially at the same height.

The rail support legs 5, to each of which may be coupled one or more item support
20 rails, may also be elongated, and may exhibit any of several cross-sectional shapes (e.g., circular, oval, polygonal, hexagonal, rectangular, non-circular annular, square, and/or C shaped, whether referring to the outer surface of a non-hollow member or a hollow member, as but a few examples). One or more rails may be coupled to a rail support leg. The legs may be straight or curved (a curved leg may have straight section(s)). A leg may
25 define a substantially vertical axis 13 (e.g., the leg may itself have a vertical centerline 14) which may be the same as an axis about which a pivot coupler (e.g., a pivot coupler apparatus) allows rotation of a coupled rail (rotation does not require a full rotation, as a mere sweep of a few degrees is deemed rotation). It should be noted that a straight, vertical rail support leg 15 is a type of straight rail support leg. Further, any of the legs
30 may be height adjustable upon manipulation of a leg height adjustment apparatus 16 such as a clamp.

Particular embodiments of the inventive technology may include a left, percussion instrument support rail 20 supported by a furthest left, rail support leg 21 and a center left, 35 rail support leg 22; a center, percussion instrument support rail 23 supported by the center

left, rail support leg 22 and a center right, rail support leg 24; and a right, percussion instrument support rail 25 supported by the center right, rail support leg 24 and a furthest right, rail support leg 26. Each rail may be coupled to its respective rail support legs by couplers. Of course, such particular embodiments are only certain of the many

5 embodiments within the ambit of the inventive technology.

It should be understood that the inventive technology includes not only inventive apparatus but also inventive methods (e.g., support methods), which may include steps such as "establishing at least one item support rail as a non-horizontal item support rail".

10 This limit may include positioning a straight or curved, item support rail as a non-horizontal item support rail, which step may be effected upon appropriate coupler of the rail.

It is also of note that one application of the inventive technology is musical instrument support and, in particular, percussion instrument support. Percussion instruments that may be supported by the apparatus include, but are not limited to, drums, high hats, and cymbals. Percussion instruments may be attached directly to not only the rails, but also the legs (e.g., the upper portion of the legs). They may instead be attached directly to risers that attach directly to a rail or leg. As mentioned, the apparatus and

20 methods may find application not only to musical instrument support, but also to the more general field of item support. Items supported include, but are not limited to percussion instruments and indeed anything that one might want to establish in a manner similar to drums of a drum set for display or use.

25 Figures 9-14 show types of coupler apparatus 17. The aforementioned coupler (also shown as part of the support apparatus in Figs. 1-8) relates to this specific type of coupler apparatus 17. It should be understood, of course, that these figures relate only to certain embodiments of the broader inventive coupler apparatus technology, which includes within its ambit the apparatus shown in the figures in addition to apparatus that

30 are not shown but otherwise adequately described.

The couplers shown include pivot couplers 18 that may enable rotatable motion of the rail about a substantially vertical axis 13 (such rotatable motion may first require manipulation of the coupler by a user, although this is not a requirement for all

35 embodiments). Substantially vertical axes includes those axes that are from approximately

85 – 95 degrees relative to a horizontal supporting floor that the axis passes through. This vertical axis may be defined by a rail support leg (e.g., the axis may be substantially the same as a centerline defined by the leg) and/or the pivot coupler (e.g., the axis may pass through the substantial center of an opening 19 of the coupler through which the coupled leg passes).

It should be understood that each the term “coupling” or “coupler apparatus” is a broad term that includes an apparatus that is operable to, e.g., sufficiently retain one member in substantially fixed position relative to another member coupled thereto. A coupling may be releasable to release retained members and/or perhaps to allow rotation of one or both of the retained members relative to the other; it may be detachable from the apparatus of which it forms a part, although these features are not necessarily implied by the use of the term. Of course, a coupling may directly contact retained members at ends or at parts other than their ends.

15

In their typical application, the couplers would couple structural support members (which play a role in providing support as desired), and thus could be properly characterized as structural support member coupler apparatus. When the structural support members that they couple are part of a musical instrument support apparatus (e.g., a drum stand), they may be referred to as musical instrument structural support member coupler apparatus or, more specifically, percussion instrument structural support member coupler apparatus.

Typically, two or more couplers will couple each rail to rail support legs (e.g., one coupler per attachment). Of course, a coupled item support rail is an item support rail that is coupled (e.g., to a rail support leg) by a coupler. These couplers may be located anywhere along the length of a rail, such as at either end thereof. Any of these couplers may be pivot couplers 18 that pivotally couple a rail to a rail support leg, enabling rotatable motion of the rail (perhaps such rotatable motion can take place only after manipulation of the coupler and/or application of a sufficient torque to the rail). This rotatable motion may be about a substantially vertical axis, and it may be that such motion is possible only after manipulation of the coupler (e.g., unscrewing screws or disengaging a clamping lever) to release the coupler, although, again, this is not a requirement. Any of the couplers may enable height adjustment of a coupled rail. This height adjustment may be substantially purely vertical translatory height adjustment (e.g., where the rail is

attached to two legs and the couplers, perhaps upon release, enable the rail to be raised or lowered vertically, without any rotation or component of horizontal motion of the rail). However, this height adjustment may instead be of a different nature (e.g., substantially no elevation change in the rail at one of the couplers but instead a rotation about a horizontal 5 axis passing through that coupler and concomitant elevation changes at different parts of the rail).

Any coupler may couple a rail to a leg at an angle (e.g., a relative angle) other than ninety degrees 19 (e.g., 95 degrees, 85 degrees, 92 degrees, 87 degrees, as but a few of 10 many examples). Of course, it may be this feature that allows a coupled non-horizontal item support rail to rotate about a vertical axis (e.g., one that passes through a pivot coupler).

It should also be noted that any of the legs (or indeed, even any of the rails) may be 15 extended or shortened at any point along their lengths by a telescoping mechanism such as a collar clamp 16. Of course, such a mechanism would afford an often desirable manner of adjustment.

A coupler apparatus may comprise a first compression element 27; a second 20 compression element 28; and at least one compression enhancement element 29. These first and second compression elements, when (a) being established in an oppositely facing orientation 30 at least partially around two members to be retained 31, 32 (so as to establish a compression configuration 30 of the coupler apparatus), and (b) when sufficiently compressed towards one another upon operation of the at least one 25 compression enhancement element, may retain in substantially fixed relation the two members (e.g., an item support rail and rail support leg) to be retained. One of the members to be retained (e.g., the rail) may have a terminus 34 (e.g., a rail end) between the first and the second compression elements when the compression elements are established in the compression configuration, and that terminus may define an terminus 30 interface 35. Further, the first and the second compression elements, when established in the compression configuration, may establish a cable channel 36 adapted to direct at least one cable from outside 37 of the first and second compression elements to through the terminus interface. The compression elements may be attached (e.g., via a hinge) or detached (e.g., not connected) from one another prior to their establishment in the

compression configuration. The compression elements may be substantially identical such that each is a substantial compression element half, or, of course, they can be dissimilar.

The cable channel may establish at least one cable port 38 that is open to the
5 environment external the compression elements 37 when they are in their compression configuration. Each cable port may have a diameter that is less than that of any cable end connectors 39 that may be located at the end of the cable 40 that is to pass through the port. There may be an upper cable port 41 and a lower cable port 42 in those embodiments where there is more than one cable port. Where there are two cables, the
10 cables may cross 43 (e.g., one behind the other) substantially at their intersection with the terminus interface. This interface may be hidden from view when the compression elements are established in a compression configuration.

The compression enhancement elements may include a wide variety of devices,
15 structures or features, such as at least one nut 44 and at least one bolt 45, a compression lever arm, clasps, elastic securing devices, a toothed strap and lever, as but a few examples.

The coupler apparatus may be an item support structure parts coupler apparatus 46
20 (e.g., an apparatus that retains in substantially fixed relative position two or more parts of an item support structure such as an item support apparatus). More specifically, it may be a percussion instrument support structure parts coupler apparatus 47 (e.g., an apparatus that retains in substantially fixed relative position two or more parts of a percussion instrument support structure such as a percussion instrument support apparatus). Where
25 the coupler apparatus retains an item support rail in substantially fixed position relative to a rail support leg, the coupler apparatus may be an item support rail and rail support leg coupler apparatus.

The item support rails, rail support legs and the couplers may be fabricated of any
30 variety of materials, including, but not limited to: steel, metal, plastic, composite materials, fiberglass, and/or alloy, as but a few examples. The rails, legs and couplers need not be of the same material, of course. All parts or elements can be made from any of a variety of well known manufacturing methods, including but not limited to injection molding, molding, die casting, extrusion, roll forming, welding, turning, stamping, drilling
35 and/or piercing, to name a few.

A coupling method may comprise the steps of: positioning a terminus of an item support rail in a desired retention position 48 relative to a rail support leg to which it is to be retained; establishing a first compression element against a first side 49 of the item support rail terminus and a portion 50 of the rail support leg that is proximate the terminus 34; establishing a length 51 of each of all of the at least one cable exiting the terminus in a channel portion 63 in a desired cable installation position 53; establishing a second compression element 28 against a second side 54 of the item support rail terminus and a portion 50 of the rail support leg that is proximate the terminus 34; enhancing the compression effected by the compression elements on the terminus and the portion of the rail support leg that is proximate the terminus; and retaining the terminus of the item support rail in the desired retention position relative to the rail support leg to which it is to be retained. It should be noted that the step of "enhancing the compression effected by the compression elements" may involve screwing a bolt into a nut, operating a lever, or manipulating an elastic device, as but a few examples. Further, it may be that a step takes place as a result of the performance of an earlier or simultaneous step (e.g., the step of "retaining..." may take place as a result of the performance of the step of "enhancing the compression..."). The step of establishing a length of each of all of the at least one cable exiting the terminus in a channel or channel portion in a desired cable installation position 53 may comprise the step of establishing a portion 55 of a first cable 56 in a first channel portion 57 in a first desired position 58 and establishing a portion 59 of a second cable 60 in a second channel portion 61 in a second desired position 62.

Another coupling method may comprise the steps of: establishing a first portion 64 of a first cable 56 within at least a portion 65 of a first structural support member 66 so as to situate the first portion of the first cable in a desired cable installation position 67; establishing a terminus 68 of the first structural support member in a desired installation position 69 relative to a second structural support member 72; establishing a second portion 70 of the first cable in a desired cable installation position 71 relative to the second structural support member; establishing a coupler apparatus 17 substantially around at least portions of opposite sides 73 of: the terminus of the first structural support member, the second structural support member, and the first cable; and retaining the first structural support member and the second structural support member in fixed relative position, where the first cable has two termini 74, and where the coupling method does not comprise the step of pulling either of the termini of the first cable through the coupler

apparatus after the performance of the step of establishing a coupler apparatus substantially around at least portions of opposite sides of: the terminus of the first structural support member, the portion of the second structural support member, and the second portion of the first cable. Additionally, the method may comprise the steps of

5 establishing a first portion 75 of a second cable 76 within at least a portion 65 of the first structural support member 66 so as to situate the first portion of the second cable in a desired cable installation position 77; and establishing a second portion 78 of the second cable in a desired cable installation position 79 relative to the second structural support member, in addition to other steps described in the claims.

10

It should be noted that the step of retaining the first structural support member and the second structural support member in fixed relative position may comprise the step of compressing the coupler apparatus. Also, the step of establishing a first portion of a first cable within at least a portion of a first structural support member so as to situate the first portion of the first cable in a desired cable installation position may involve the pulling of the cable. It is also of note that a coupler apparatus can hold two members in fixed relative position and still allow those members to be moved (e.g., rotated) relative to each other, but perhaps only upon application of a sufficient force or torque, maybe after manipulation of a device or part(s) such as a compression enhancement element.

15

It should also be understood that the term "desired installation position" can be used relative to different parts, and indicates that position in which it is desired that the referenced part be upon installation effected by completion of the coupling method. However, because the installation that takes place upon completion of the method might

20 not leave the cables in their final installation position (e.g., that position desired when all of the drums, e.g., are attached (either directly or with risers) to the rails or legs), it may be necessary to pull cable through the installed compression elements to its desired location. Thus, a cable can be established in its "desired cable installation position" and still be pulled to a final desired position (e.g., relative to a surrounding structural support

25 member), as long as any cable end terminations, including connectors at the ends (which typically have diameters that are greater than that of the cable) need not be, and are not, pulled through the coupler apparatus. As is clear from this discussion, when the term cable installation position is used, the installation referred to need not be the final installation occurring after the items supported (e.g., the percussion instruments) are

30 attached (either directly or indirectly) to the item support rails and rail support legs.

35

As can be easily understood from the foregoing, the basic concepts of the present invention may be embodied in a variety of ways. It involves (but is not limited to) both support and attachment techniques as well as devices to accomplish the appropriate support or attachment. In this application, the support or attachment techniques are disclosed as part of the results shown to be achieved by the various devices described and as steps which are inherent to utilization. They are simply the natural result of utilizing the devices as intended and described. In addition, while some devices are disclosed, it should be understood that these not only accomplish certain methods but also can be varied in a number of ways. Importantly, as to all of the foregoing, all of these facets should be understood to be encompassed by this disclosure.

The discussion included in this patent application is intended to serve as a basic description. The reader should be aware that the specific discussion may not explicitly describe all embodiments possible; many alternatives are implicit. It also may not fully explain the generic nature of the invention and may not explicitly show how each feature or element can actually be representative of a broader function or of a great variety of alternative or equivalent elements. Again, these are implicitly included in this disclosure. Where the invention is described in device-oriented terminology, each element of the device implicitly performs a function. Apparatus claims may not only be included for the device described, but also method or process claims may be included to address the functions the invention and each element performs. Neither the description nor the terminology is intended to limit the scope of the claims that will be included in any subsequent patent application.

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It should also be understood that a variety of changes may be made without departing from the essence of the invention. Such changes are also implicitly included in the description. They still fall within the scope of this invention. A broad disclosure encompassing both the explicit embodiment(s) shown, the great variety of implicit alternative embodiments, and the broad methods or processes and the like are encompassed by this disclosure and may be relied upon when drafting the claims for any subsequent patent application. It should be understood that such language changes and broader or more detailed claiming may be accomplished at a later date (such as by any required deadline) or in the event the applicant subsequently seeks a patent filing based on this filing. With this understanding, the reader should be aware that this disclosure is to be

understood to support any subsequently filed patent application that may seek examination of as broad a base of claims as deemed within the applicant's right and may be designed to yield a patent covering numerous aspects of the invention both independently and as an overall system.

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Further, each of the various elements of the invention and claims may also be achieved in a variety of manners. Additionally, when used, the term "element" is to be understood as encompassing individual as well as plural structures that may or may not be physically connected. This disclosure should be understood to encompass each such variation, be it a variation of an embodiment of any apparatus embodiment, a method or process embodiment, or even merely a variation of any element of these. Particularly, it should be understood that as the disclosure relates to elements of the invention, the words for each element may be expressed by equivalent apparatus terms or method terms -- even if only the function or result is the same. Such equivalent, broader, or even more generic terms should be considered to be encompassed in the description of each element or action. Such terms can be substituted where desired to make explicit the implicitly broad coverage to which this invention is entitled. As but one example, it should be understood that all actions may be expressed as a means for taking that action or as an element which causes that action. Similarly, each physical element disclosed should be understood to encompass a disclosure of the action which that physical element facilitates. Regarding this last aspect, as but one example, the disclosure of a "support" should be understood to encompass disclosure of the act of "supporting" -- whether explicitly discussed or not -- and, conversely, were there effectively disclosure of the act of "supporting", such a disclosure should be understood to encompass disclosure of a "support" and even a "means for supporting". Such changes and alternative terms are to be understood to be explicitly included in the description.

Any acts of law, statutes, regulations, or rules mentioned in this application for patent; or patents, publications, or other references mentioned in this provisional application for patent are hereby incorporated by reference. In addition, as to each term used it should be understood that unless its utilization in this application is inconsistent with such interpretation, common dictionary definitions should be understood as incorporated for each term and all definitions, alternative terms, and synonyms such as contained in the Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, second edition are hereby incorporated by reference. Finally, all references listed in the list of References To

Be Incorporated By Reference In Accordance With The Provisional Patent Application or other information statement filed with the application are hereby appended and hereby incorporated by reference, however, as to each of the above, to the extent that such information or statements incorporated by reference might be considered inconsistent with
 5 the patenting of this/these invention(s) such statements are expressly not to be considered as made by the applicant(s).

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Thus, the applicant(s) should be understood to have support to claim and make a statement of invention to at least: i) each of the devices (including support and attachment devices) as herein disclosed and described, ii) the related methods disclosed and described, iii) similar, equivalent, and even implicit variations of each of these devices and methods, iv) those alternative designs which accomplish each of the functions shown as are

disclosed and described, v) those alternative designs and methods which accomplish each of the functions shown as are implicit to accomplish that which is disclosed and described, vi) each feature, component, and step shown as separate and independent inventions, vii) the applications enhanced by the various systems or components disclosed, viii) the resulting products produced by such systems or components, ix) each system, method, and element shown or described as now applied to any specific field or devices mentioned, x) methods and apparatuses substantially as described hereinbefore and with reference to any of the accompanying examples, xi) the various combinations and permutations of each of the elements disclosed, and xii) each potentially dependent claim or concept as a dependency on each and every one of the independent claims or concepts presented.

With regard to claims whether now or later presented for examination, it should be understood that for practical reasons and so as to avoid great expansion of the examination burden, the applicant may at any time present only initial claims or perhaps only initial claims with only initial dependencies. Support should be understood to exist to the degree required under new matter laws -- including but not limited to European Patent Convention Article 123(2) and United States Patent Law 35 USC 132 or other such laws-- to permit the addition of any of the various dependencies or other elements presented under one independent claim or concept as dependencies or elements under any other independent claim or concept. In drafting any claims at any time whether in this application or in any subsequent application, it should also be understood that the applicant has intended to capture as full and broad a scope of coverage as legally available. To the extent that insubstantial substitutes are made, to the extent that the applicant did not in fact draft any claim so as to literally encompass any particular embodiment, and to the extent otherwise applicable, the applicant should not be understood to have in any way intended to or actually relinquished such coverage as the applicant simply may not have been able to anticipate all eventualities; one skilled in the art, should not be reasonably expected to have drafted a claim that would have literally encompassed such alternative embodiments.

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Further, if or when used, the use of the transitional phrase "comprising" is used to maintain the "open-end" claims herein, according to traditional claim interpretation. Thus, unless the context requires otherwise, it should be understood that the term "comprise" or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising", are intended to imply the inclusion of a stated element or step or group of elements or steps but not the exclusion of any other

element or step or group of elements or steps. Such terms should be interpreted in their most expansive form so as to afford the applicant the broadest coverage legally permissible.

- 5 Finally, any claims set forth at any time are hereby incorporated by reference as part of this description of the invention, and the applicant expressly reserves the right to use all of or a portion of such incorporated content of such claims as additional description to support any of or all of the claims or any element or component thereof, and the applicant further expressly reserves the right to move any portion of or all of the
10 incorporated content of such claims or any element or component thereof from the description into the claims or vice-versa as necessary to define the matter for which protection is sought by this application or by any subsequent continuation, division, or continuation-in-part application thereof, or to obtain any benefit of, reduction in fees pursuant to, or to comply with the patent laws, rules, or regulations of any country or
15 treaty, and such content incorporated by reference shall survive during the entire pendency of this application including any subsequent continuation, division, or continuation-in-part application thereof or any reissue or extension thereon.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5 1. A support apparatus comprising:

- at least two item support rails, each supported by at least two rail support legs that are each coupled thereto by a coupler,

10 wherein said at least two rail support legs are at least two of at least three rail support legs,

wherein each of said at least three rail support legs has a lower end adapted to rest on a lower supporting surface,

15 wherein at least one of said couplers is a pivot coupler that pivotally couples one of said item support rails to one of said rail support legs and enables rotatable motion of said item support rail about a substantially vertical axis, and

20 wherein at least one of said at least two item support rails is a non-horizontal item support rail.

2. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said at least two item support rails comprises at least two musical instrument support rails.

25 3. A support apparatus as described in claim 2 wherein said at least two musical instrument support rails comprises at least two percussion instrument support rails.

4. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein at least one of said rail support legs is coupled to more than one item support rails.

30 5. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said substantially vertical axis is defined by said pivot coupler.

6. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said substantially vertical axis is co-axial with an axis defined by a vertical, rail support leg.
7. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein at least one of said rail support legs is a substantially straight, vertical, rail support leg.
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8. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein at least two of said couplers enable height adjustment of at least one of said item support rails.
- 10 9. A support apparatus as described in claim 8 wherein said height adjustment is substantially purely vertical translatory height adjustment.
10. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein at least one of said rail support legs is height adjustable.
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11. A support apparatus as described in claim 10 wherein said height adjustable rail support leg is height adjustable upon manipulation of a clamp.
12. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said non-horizontal item support rail is a curved item support rail.
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13. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein each of said at least two item support rails has a left end and a right end relative to a user of the stand, and wherein each of the couplers is established substantially at either said left end or said right end of one of said item support rails.
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14. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein the total number of rail support legs is one greater than the total number of item support rails.
- 30 15. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said at least one non-horizontal item support rail comprises at least two non-horizontal item support rails.
16. A support apparatus as described in claim 15 wherein at least two non-horizontal item support rails comprises at least three non-horizontal item support rails.
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17. A support apparatus as described in claim 15 wherein each of said at least two item support rails is a non-horizontal item support rail.
- 5 18. A support apparatus as described in claim 17 wherein each of said non-horizontal item support rails is a curved, item support rail.
- 10 19. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said at least two item support rails comprises three item support rails.
- 15 20. A support apparatus as described in claim 19 wherein said at least one non-horizontal item support rail comprises a peripheral, item support rail.
21. A support apparatus as described in claim 19 wherein said at least one non-
15 horizontal item support rail comprises at least two non-horizontal item support rail.
22. A support apparatus as described in claim 21 wherein each of said at least two non-
horizontal item support rail are peripheral, item support rails.
- 20 23. A support apparatus as described in claim 19 wherein said at least one non-
horizontal item support rail comprises at least three non-horizontal item support
rails.
24. A support apparatus as described in claim 23 wherein said at least three non-
25 horizontal item support rails comprise two peripheral, item support rails and one
center item support rail.
25. A support apparatus as described in claim 19 wherein said at least one non-
horizontal item support rail comprises a center, item support rail.
- 30 26. A support apparatus as described in claim 19 wherein two of said at least three
item support rails span the same distance between the same two rail support legs.
27. A support apparatus as described in claim 19 wherein said at least two item support
35 rails comprises four item support rails.

28. A support apparatus as described in claim 27 wherein two of said at least four item support rails span the same distance between the same two rail support legs.
- 5 29. A support apparatus as described in claim 28 wherein said two item support rails are center, item support rails.
30. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said non-horizontal item support rail is a peripheral, item support rail.
- 10 31. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said non-horizontal item support rail is pivotally coupled to at least one of said at least two rail support legs so as to enable rotatable motion of said non-horizontal item support rail about a substantially vertical axis.
- 15 32. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein at least one of said item support rails is coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees.
- 20 33. A support apparatus as described in claim 32 wherein said at least one of said item support rails coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is said non-horizontal item support rail.
- 25 34. A support apparatus as described in claim 32 wherein said at least one of said item support rails coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is a curved item support rail.
- 30 35. A support apparatus as described in claim 32 each of said at least two rail support legs is coupled to each of said at least two item support rails at an angle other than ninety degrees.
36. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein at least one of said at least two item support rails is adjustably coupled to two of said at least two rail support legs so as to allow substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of said at least one item support rail.

37. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 further comprising any items supported by said support apparatus.
- 5 38. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 further comprising any musical instruments supported by said support apparatus.
39. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 further comprising any risers attached to said item support rails.
- 10 40. A support apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said support apparatus is collapsible into a storage configuration.
41. A support method comprising the steps of:
 - 15 - coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers;
 - enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis; and
 - establishing at least one of said item support rails as a non-horizontal item support rail.
42. A support method as described in claim 41 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails comprises the step of coupling each of at least two musical instrument support rails.
- 25 43. A support method as described in claim 42 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two musical instrument support rails comprises the step of coupling each of at least two percussion instrument support rails.
- 30 44. A support method as described in claim 41 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers comprises the step of coupling at least two item support rails to the same rail support leg.

45. A support method as described in claim 41 wherein said step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis comprises the step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis defined by a coupler.

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46. A support method as described in claim 41 further comprising the step of enabling height adjustment of one of said support rails relative to two rail support legs coupled thereto.

10 47. A support method as described in claim 46 wherein said step of enabling height adjustment of one of said support rails comprises the step of enabling substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment.

15 48. A support method as described in claim 41 wherein said step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a non-horizontal item support rail comprises the step of establishing a curved, item support rail.

20 49. A support method as described in claim 41 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers comprises the step of coupling at least one of said item support rails to at least one of said rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.

25 50. A support method as described in claim 41 further comprising the step of supporting items on said at least two item support rails.

51. A support method as described in claim 41 further comprising the items supported by said at least two item support rails.

30 52. A support apparatus comprising:

- at least two item support rails, each supported by at least two rail support legs that are each coupled thereto by a coupler,

35 wherein said at least two rail support legs are at least two of at least three rail support legs,

wherein each of said at least three rail support legs has a lower end adapted to rest on a lower supporting surface,

5 wherein at least two of said couplers are height adjust couplers that enable substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of one of said item support rails, and

10 wherein at least one of said at least two item support rails is a non-horizontal item support rail.

53. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein said height adjust couplers enable purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of said non-horizontal item support rail.

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54. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein said support apparatus is a musical item support apparatus.

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55. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein said non-horizontal item support rail is a curved, item support rail.

56. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein a horizontal projection of said non-horizontal item support rail is a straight line.

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57. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein a horizontal projection of said non-horizontal item support rail is a curved line.

58. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein said at least two rail support legs are substantially vertical.

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59. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein said height adjust coupler requires loosening to adjust height.

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60. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein at least one of said rail support legs is height adjustable.

61. A support apparatus as described in claim 60 wherein said height adjustable rail support leg is height adjustable upon manipulation of a clamp.
- 5 62. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein said height adjust coupler is also a pivot coupler that enables rotation of said non-horizontal item support rail about a vertical axis.
- 10 63. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein at least one of said height adjust coupler couples at least one of said item support rails to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees.
- 15 64. A support apparatus as described in claim 63 wherein said at least one of said item support rails coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is said non-horizontal item support rail.
- 20 65. A support apparatus as described in claim 63 wherein said at least one of said item support rails coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is a curved, item support rail.
66. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein said at least two item support rails comprises at least two musical instrument support rails.
- 25 67. A support apparatus as described in claim 66 wherein said at least two musical instrument support rails comprises at least two percussion instrument support rails.
68. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 further comprising any items supported by said support apparatus.
- 30 69. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 further comprising any musical instruments supported by said support apparatus.
70. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 further comprising any risers attached to said item support rails.

71. A support apparatus as described in claim 52 wherein said support apparatus is collapsible into a storage configuration.

72. A support method comprising the steps of:

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- coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers;

- enabling substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of at least one of said item support rails relative to rail support legs coupled thereto; and

10 - establishing at least one of said item support rails as a non-horizontal item support rail.

15 73. A support method as described in claim 72 further comprising the step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis.

20 74. A support method as described in claim 73 wherein said step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis comprises the step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis defined by a coupler.

25 75. A support method as described in claim 72 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers comprises the step of coupling at least one of said item support rails to at least one of said rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.

30 76. A support method as described in claim 72 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails comprises the step of coupling each of at least two musical instrument support rails.

77. A support method as described in claim 76 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two musical instrument support rails comprises the step of coupling each of at least two percussion instrument support rails.

78. A support method as described in claim 72 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers comprises the step of coupling at least two item support rails to the same rail support leg.

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79. A support method as described in claim 72 wherein said step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a non-horizontal item support rail comprises the step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a curved, item support rail.

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80. A support method as described in claim 72 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers comprises the step of coupling at least one of said item support rails to at least one of said rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.

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81. A support method as described in claim 72 further comprising the step of supporting items on said at least two item support rails

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82. A support method as described in claim 72 further comprising the items supported by said at least two item support rails or by said at least two rail support legs.

83. A support apparatus comprising:

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- at least two item support rails, each supported by at least two rail support legs that are each coupled thereto by a coupler,

wherein said at least two rail support legs are at least two of at least three rail support legs,

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wherein each of said at least three rail support legs has a lower end adapted to rest on a lower supporting surface,

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wherein at least two of said couplers are height adjust couplers that enable substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of at least one of said item support rails, and

wherein at least one of said couplers couples at least one of said item support rails to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees.

- 5 84. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 wherein said at least one of said item support rails coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is a non-horizontal item support rail.
- 10 85. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 wherein said at least one of said item support rails coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is a curved, item support rail.
- 15 86. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 wherein at least one of said item support rails is a non-horizontal item support rail.
87. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 wherein at least one of said item support rails is pivotally adjustable about a substantially vertical axis defined by one of said couplers.
- 20 88. A support apparatus as described in claim 87 wherein each of said item support rails is pivotally adjustable about a substantially vertical axis defined by a coupler that couples a respective item support rail.
- 25 89. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 wherein at least one of said rail support legs is height adjustable.
90. A support apparatus as described in claim 89 wherein said height adjustable rail support leg is height adjustable upon manipulation of a clamp.
- 30 91. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 further comprising any items supported by said support apparatus.
92. A support apparatus as described in claim 91 wherein said items comprises musical instruments.

93. A support apparatus as described in claim 92 wherein said musical instruments comprises percussion instruments.
94. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 further comprising any musical instruments supported by said support apparatus.
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95. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 further comprising any risers attached to said item support rails.
- 10 96. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 wherein said support apparatus is collapsible into a storage configuration.
97. A support apparatus as described in claim 83 wherein said item support rail comprises a musical instrument support rail.
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98. A support apparatus as described in claim 97 wherein said musical instrument support rail comprises a percussion instrument support rail.
99. A support method comprising the steps of:
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 - coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers; and
 - enabling substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of at least one of said support rails relative to rail support legs coupled thereto,
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wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers comprises the step of coupling at least one of said item support rails to at least one of said rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.
- 30
100. A support method as described in claim 99 further comprising the step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a non-horizontal item support rail.

101. A support method as described in claim 100 wherein said step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a non-horizontal item support rail comprises the step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a curved, item support rail.

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102. A support method as described in claim 99 further comprising the step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis.

- 10 103. A support method as described in claim 102 wherein said step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis comprises the step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis defined by a coupler.

- 15 104. A support method as described in claim 99 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails comprises the step of coupling each of at least two musical instrument support rails.

- 20 105. A support method as described in claim 104 wherein the step of coupling each of at least two musical instrument support rails comprises the step of coupling each of at least two percussion instrument support rails.

106. A support method as described in claim 99 further comprising the step of supporting items on said at least two item support rails.

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107. A support method as described in claim 99 further comprising the items supported by said at least two item support rails or by said at least two rail support legs.

108. A support apparatus comprising:

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- a plurality of item support rails, each of which is supported by two or more rail support legs, and each of which has two rail ends,

35 wherein at least one of said item support rails is coupled to at least two rail support legs by couplers,

wherein at least one of said item support rails is pivotally adjustable about a substantially vertical axis, and

5 wherein at least one of said couplers couples at least one of said item support rails to a coupled rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees.

109. A support apparatus as described in claim 108 wherein at least one of said item support rails has a section that is higher than a different section of that rail.

10 110. A support apparatus as described in claim 109 wherein said at least one of said item support rails coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees comprises said at least one of said item support rails that has a section that is higher than a different section of that rail.

15 111. A support apparatus as described in claim 108 wherein said at least one of said item support rails coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is a curved, item support rail.

20 112. A support apparatus as described in claim 108 wherein at least two of said couplers are height adjust couplers that enable substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of at least one of said item support rails.

25 113. A support apparatus as described in claim 112 wherein said at least one of said item support rails that can be substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjusted comprises said at least one of said item support rails that has a section that is higher than a different section of that rail.

30 114. A support apparatus as described in claim 108 wherein at least one of said rail support legs is height adjustable.

115. A support apparatus as described in claim 114 wherein said height adjustable rail support leg is height adjustable upon manipulation of a clamp.

116. A support apparatus as described in claim 108 further comprising any items supported by said support apparatus.
117. A support apparatus as described in claim 116 wherein said items comprises musical instruments.
5
118. A support apparatus as described in claim 117 wherein said musical instruments comprises percussion instruments.
- 10 119. A support apparatus as described in claim 108 further comprising any musical instruments supported by said support apparatus.
120. A support apparatus as described in claim 108 further comprising any risers attached to said item support rails.
15
121. A support apparatus as described in claim 108 wherein said support apparatus is collapsible into a storage configuration.
122. A support apparatus as described in claim 108 wherein said item support rail comprises a musical instrument support rail.
20
123. A support apparatus as described in claim 122 wherein said musical instrument support rail comprises a percussion instrument support rail.
- 25 124. A support method comprising the steps of:
 - coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers; and
 - enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis,
30

wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails to at least two rail support legs with at least two couplers comprises the step of coupling at least one of said item support rails to at least one of said rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.
35

125. A support method as described in claim 124 further comprising the step of enabling height adjustment of at least one of said support rails relative to rail support legs coupled thereto.

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126. A support method as described in claim 125 wherein said step of step of enabling height adjustment comprises the step of enabling substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment.

- 10 127. A support method as described in claim 124 further comprising the step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a non-horizontal item support rail.

- 15 128. A support method as described in claim 127 wherein said step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a non-horizontal item support rail comprises the step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a curved, item support rail.

- 20 129. A support method as described in claim 124 wherein said step of coupling each of at least two item support rails comprises the step of coupler each of at least two musical instrument support rails.

- 25 130. A support method as described in claim 129 wherein the step of coupling each of at least two musical instrument support rails comprises the step of coupling each of at least two percussion instrument support rails.

- 30 131. A support method as described in claim 124 wherein said step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis comprises the step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said item support rails about a substantially vertical axis defined by said coupler.

132. A support method as described in claim 124 further comprising the step of supporting items on said at least two item support rails.

133. A support method as described in claim 124 further comprising the items supported by said at least two item support rails or by said at least two rail support legs.
- 5 134. A support method as described in claim 124 further comprising the step of collapsing an apparatus formed by the method of claim 124.
- 10 135. A percussion instrument support apparatus comprising:
 - a left, percussion instrument support rail supported by a furthest left, rail support leg and a center left, rail support leg;
 - a center, percussion instrument support rail supported by said center left, rail support leg and a center right, rail support leg; and
 - a right, percussion instrument support rail supported by said center right, rail support leg and a furthest right, rail support leg,wherein at least one of said percussion instrument support rails is a non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail,
- 20 wherein each of said instrument support rails is coupled to its respective said support legs by couplers, and
wherein at least one of said couplers is a pivot coupler that enables rotatable adjustment about a substantially vertical axis of a coupled percussion instrument support rail.
- 25 136. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein said substantially vertical axes are each defined by a rail support leg.
- 30 137. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein said center, percussion instrument support rail is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.

138. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein said left, percussion instrument support rail is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
- 5 139. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein said right, percussion instrument support rail is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
- 10 140. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein at least one of said percussion instrument support rails has two rail support legs coupled to it at different heights from a lower supporting surface on which said two rail support legs rest.
- 15 141. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein each said left, said center, and said right percussion instrument support rail is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
142. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein at least one of said rail support legs is height adjustable.
- 20 143. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 142 wherein said height adjustable rail support leg is height adjustable upon manipulation of a clamp.
- 25 144. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein said percussion instrument support rail that is coupled to one of said rail support legs by a pivot coupler is said at least one non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
- 30 145. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein said couplers comprise at least two height adjust couplers that enable vertical height adjustment of at least one percussion instrument rail.

146. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 145 wherein said vertical height adjustment is substantially purely vertical translatory height adjustment.
- 5 147. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 145 wherein all of said couplers are height adjust couplers that enable vertical adjustment of percussion instrument rails coupled thereto.
- 10 148. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein at least one of said couplers couples said at least one of said percussion instrument support rails to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees.
- 15 149. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 148 wherein said at least one of said percussion instrument support rail coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is a curved, percussion instrument support rail.
150. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 148 wherein said at least one of said percussion instrument support rail coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
- 20 151. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 further comprising a second center, percussion instrument support rail.
- 25 152. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 further comprising any percussion instruments supported by said percussion instrument support apparatus.
- 30 153. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 further comprising any risers attached to said percussion instrument support rails.
154. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 135 wherein said percussion instrument support apparatus is collapsible into a storage configuration.

155. A percussion instrument support method comprising the steps of:

- providing at least four couplers;
- coupling a left, percussion instrument support rail to a first set of two rail support legs with a first set of two of said at least four couplers;
- 5 - coupling a center, percussion instrument support rail to a second set of two rail support legs with a second set of two of said at least four couplers;
- coupling a right, percussion instrument support rail to a third set of two rail support legs with a third set of two of said at least four couplers;
- 10 - enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said percussion instrument support rails about a substantially vertical axis; and
- establishing at least one of said percussion instrument support rails as a non-horizontal percussion instrument support rail.

15 156. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 155 wherein said first set, said second set, and said third set of said at least four couplers each include different couplers.

157. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 155 wherein said first set of two rail support legs, said second set of two rail support legs, and said third set of two rail support legs each share at least one support leg with a different set of rail support legs.

158. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 155 further comprising the step of enabling substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of at least one of said percussion instrument support rails relative to two rail support legs coupled thereto.

159. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 155 wherein at least one of said steps of coupling a percussion instrument support rail to a set of two rail support legs comprises the step of coupling a percussion instrument support rails to at least one rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.

160. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 155 wherein said step of establishing at least one of said percussion instrument support rails as a

non-horizontal percussion instrument support rail comprises the step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a curved, item support rail.

161. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 155 further comprising the step of coupling a second, center, percussion instrument support rail to said second set of two rail support legs with a fourth set of two of said at least four couplers.
5
162. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 155 further comprising the step of supporting percussion instruments on said at least two item support rails.
10
163. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 155 further comprising the percussion instruments supported by said at least two percussion instrument support rails or by said rail support legs.
15
164. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 155 further comprising the step of collapsing an assembly formed by the method of claim 155.
- 20 165. A percussion instrument support apparatus comprising:
 - a left, percussion instrument support rail supported by a furthest left, rail support leg and a center left, rail support leg;
 - a center, percussion instrument support rail supported by said center left, rail support leg and a center right, rail support leg; and
25
 - a right, percussion instrument support rail supported by said center right, rail support leg and a furthest right, rail support leg,wherein at least one of said percussion instrument support rails is a non-horizontal, 30 percussion instrument support rail,
wherein each of said instrument support rails is coupled to its respective said rail support legs by couplers, and

wherein at least two of said couplers are height adjust couplers that enable substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of at least one of said percussion instrument support rails.

- 5 166. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein all of said percussion instrument support rails are height adjust couplers.
- 10 167. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 166 wherein all of said height adjustable, percussion instrument support rails are coupled to rail support legs by height adjust couplers.
168. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 further comprising a second center, percussion instrument support rail.
- 15 169. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein at least one of said couplers couples a percussion instrument support rail to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees.
- 20 170. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 169 wherein said percussion instrument support rail coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
- 25 171. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 169 wherein said percussion instrument support rail coupled to a rail support leg at an angle other than ninety degrees is a curved, percussion instrument support rail.
- 30 172. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein said at least one of said percussion instrument support rails that is coupled by height adjust couplers to rail support legs comprises said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
173. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein at least one of said rail support legs is height adjustable.

174. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 173 wherein said height adjustable rail support leg is height adjustable upon manipulation of a clamp.
- 5 175. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein at least one of said couplers enables a coupled percussion instrument support rail to rotate about a substantially vertical axis.
- 10 176. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 175 wherein at least two of said couplers enable coupled percussion instrument support rails to each rotate about a different substantially vertical axis.
- 15 177. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 175 wherein said substantially vertical axis is defined by a rail support leg.
- 20 178. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein said center, percussion instrument support rail is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
- 25 179. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein said left, percussion instrument support rail is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
- 30 180. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein said right, percussion instrument support rail is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
181. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein each said left, said center, and said right percussion instrument support rail is said non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rail.
- 35 182. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein all of said couplers are height adjust couplers that enable substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of all of said percussion instrument support rails.

183. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 further comprising a second, center, percussion instrument support rail.
184. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 further comprising any percussion instruments supported by said percussion instrument support apparatus.
5
185. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 further comprising any risers attached to said percussion instrument support rails.
10
186. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 165 wherein said percussion instrument support apparatus is collapsible into a storage configuration.
15
187. A percussion instrument support method comprising the steps of:
- providing at least four couplers;
- coupling a left, percussion instrument support rail to a first set of two rail support legs with a first set of two of said at least four couplers;
- coupling a center, percussion instrument support rail to a second set of two rail support legs with a second set of two of said at least four couplers;
- coupling a right, percussion instrument support rail to a third set of two rail support legs with a third set of two of said at least four couplers;
- enabling substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of one of said percussion instrument support rails relative to two rail support legs coupled thereto; and
- establishing at least one of said percussion instrument support rails as a non-horizontal percussion instrument support rail.
20
188. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 187 as described in claim wherein said first set, said second set, and said third set of said at least four couplers each include different couplers.
30
189. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 187 wherein said first set of two rail support legs, said second set of two rail support legs, and said

third set of two rail support legs each share at least one support leg with a different set of rail support legs.

190. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 187 further comprising the step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said percussion instrument support rails about a substantially vertical axis.
5
191. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 187 wherein at least one of said steps of coupling a percussion instrument support rail to a set of two rail support legs comprises the step of coupling a percussion instrument support rails to at least one rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.
10
192. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 187 wherein said step of establishing at least one of said percussion instrument support rails as a non-horizontal percussion instrument support rail comprises the step of establishing at least one of said item support rails as a curved, item support rail.
15
193. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 187 further comprising the step of coupling a second, center, percussion instrument support rail to said second set of two rail support legs with a fourth set of two of said at least four couplers.
20
194. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 187 further comprising the step of supporting percussion instruments on said at least two item support rails.
25
195. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 187 further comprising the step of supporting percussion instruments supported by said at least two percussion instrument support rails or by said rail support legs.
30
196. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 187 further comprising the step of collapsing an assembly formed by the method of claim 187
197. A percussion instrument support apparatus comprising:
35

- a left, percussion instrument support rail supported by a furthest left, rail support leg and a center left, rail support leg;
- a center, percussion instrument support rail supported by said center left, rail support leg and a center right, rail support leg; and
- 5 - a right, percussion instrument support rail supported by said center right, rail support leg and a furthest right, rail support leg,

wherein each of said instrument support rails is coupled to its respective said rail support legs by couplers, and

10

wherein at least one of said couplers couples at least one percussion instrument support rail to at least one of its respective rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.

15 198. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 wherein at least one couplers couples a curved, percussion instrument support rails to at least one of its rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.

20 199. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 wherein at least one couplers couples a non-horizontal, percussion instrument support rails to at least one of its rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.

25 200. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 wherein said angle is greater than ninety degrees.

201. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 wherein at least one of said rail support legs is height adjustable.

30 202. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 201 wherein said height adjustable rail support leg is height adjustable upon manipulation of a clamp.

35 203. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 wherein at least a majority of said couplers each couple one of said percussion instrument support rails to one of said rail support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.

204. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 wherein at least a majority of said couplers enable adjustment of a majority of said percussion instrument support rails relative to respective rail support legs.
- 5
205. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 204 wherein at least a majority of said couplers enable height adjustment of coupled, percussion instrument support rails.
- 10 206. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 205 wherein said height adjustment is substantially pure vertical, translatory height adjustment.
207. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 wherein at least one of said percussion instrument support rails is a non-horizontal percussion instrument support rail.
- 15
208. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 further comprising a second, center, percussion instrument support rail.
- 20 209. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 further comprising any percussion instruments supported by said percussion instrument support apparatus.
- 25
210. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 further comprising any risers attached to said percussion instrument support rails.
211. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 wherein said percussion instrument support apparatus is collapsible into a storage configuration.
- 30 212. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 197 wherein at least one of said couplers enables rotatable motion of one of said percussion instrument support rails about a substantially vertical axis.
- 35
213. A percussion instrument support apparatus as described in claim 212 wherein said substantially vertical axis is co-axial with a rail support leg centerline.

214. A percussion instrument support method comprising the steps of:

- providing at least four couplers;
- 5 - coupling a left, percussion instrument support rail to a first set of two rail support legs with a first set of two of said at least four couplers;
- coupling a center, percussion instrument support rail to a second set of two rail support legs with a second set of two of said at least four couplers; and
- 10 - coupling a right, percussion instrument support rail to a third set of two rail support legs with a third set of two of said at least four couplers;

wherein at least one of said coupling steps comprises the step of coupling a percussion instrument support rail to one of said support legs at an angle other than ninety degrees.

15

215. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 214 wherein said first set, said second set, and said third set of said at least four couplers each include different couplers.

20 216. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 214 wherein said first set of two rail support legs, said second set of two rail support legs, and said third set of two rail support legs each share at least one rail support leg with a different set of rail support legs.

25 217. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 214 further comprising the step of enabling rotatable motion of at least one of said percussion instrument support rails about a substantially vertical axis.

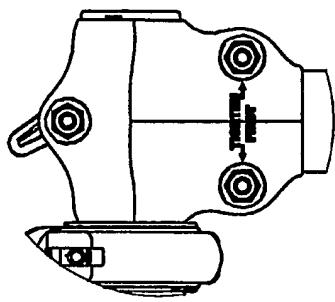
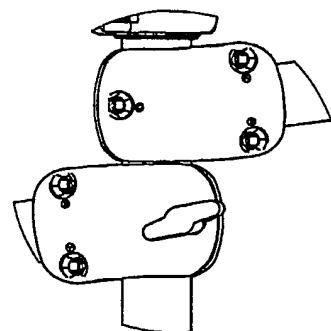
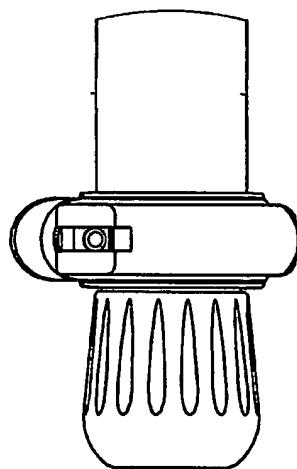
30 218. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 214 further comprising the step of enabling substantially purely vertical, translatory height adjustment of one of said percussion instrument support rails relative to two rail support legs coupled thereto.

219. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 214 further comprising the step of establishing at least one of said percussion instrument support rails as a non-horizontal percussion instrument support rail.
- 5 220. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 214 further comprising the step of coupling a second, center, percussion instrument support rail to said second set of two rail support legs with a fourth set of two of said at least four couplers.
- 10 221. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 214 further comprising the step of supporting percussion instruments on said at least two item support rails.
- 15 222. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 214 further comprising the percussion instruments supported by said at least two percussion instrument support rails or by said rail support legs.
223. A percussion instrument support method as described in claim 214 further comprising the step of collapsing an assembly formed by the method of claim 214.

20



FIG. 1a

**FIG. 1b(1)****FIG. 1b(2)****FIG. 1b(3)**

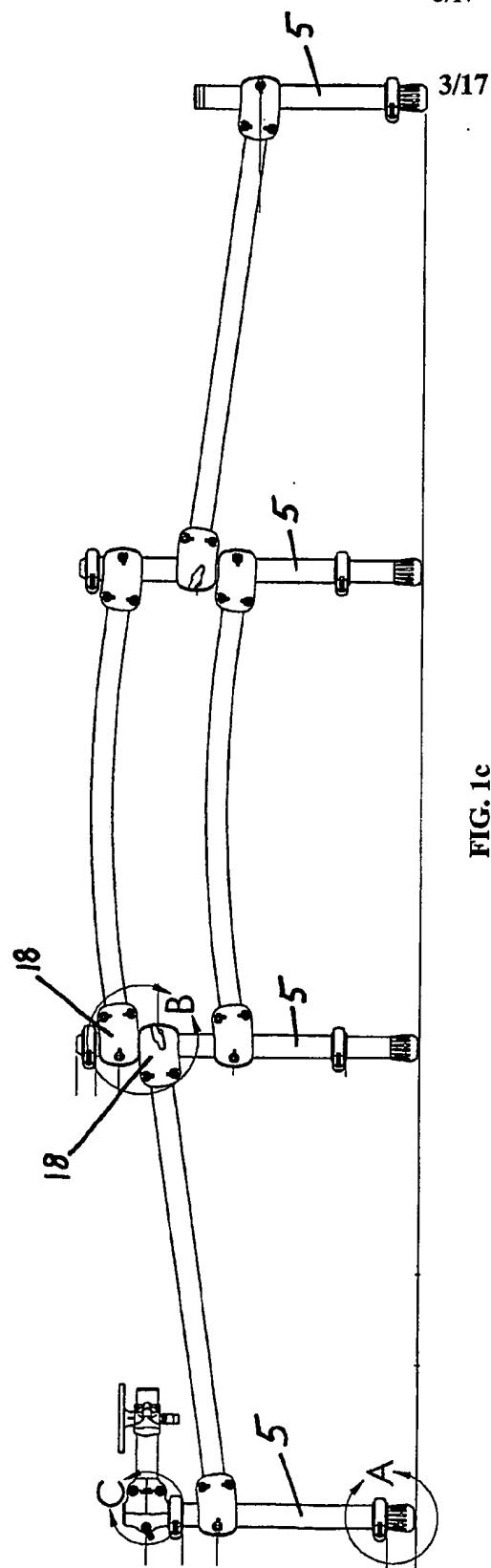
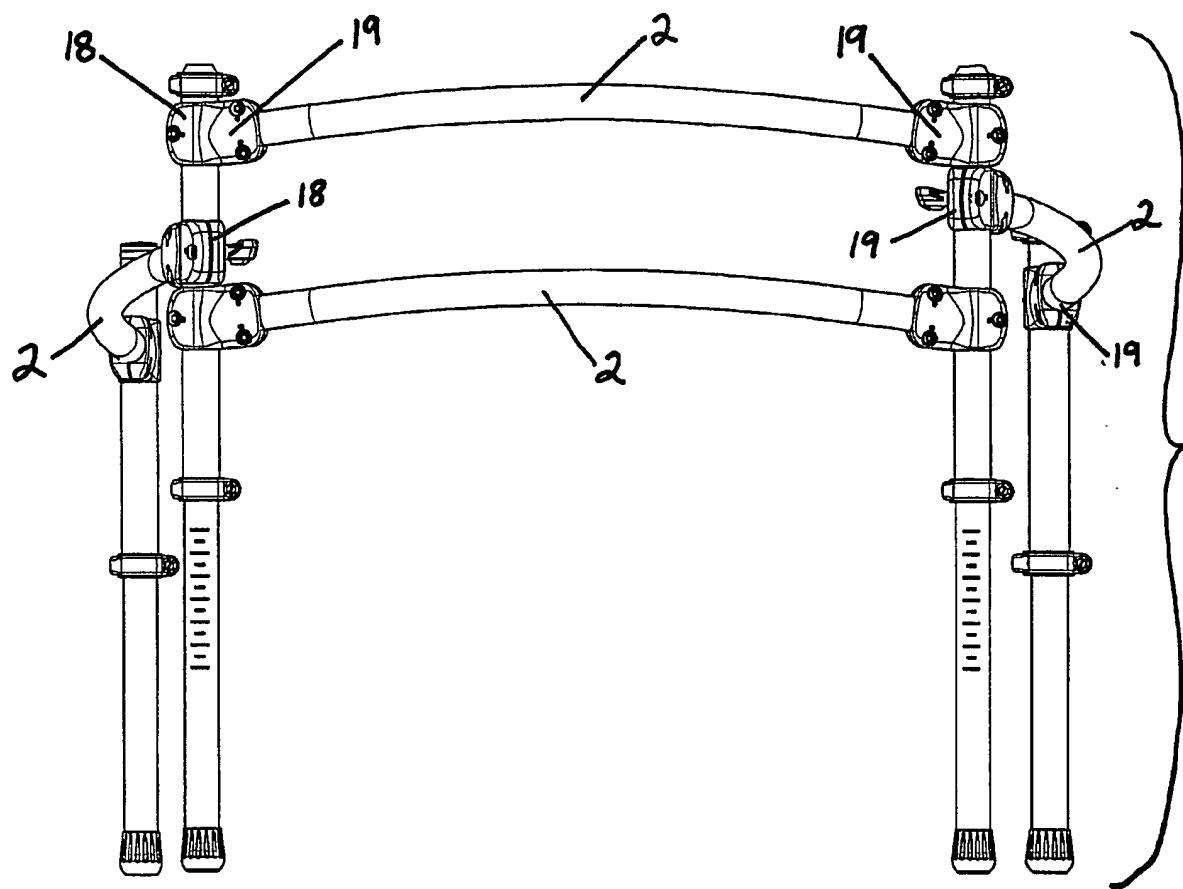
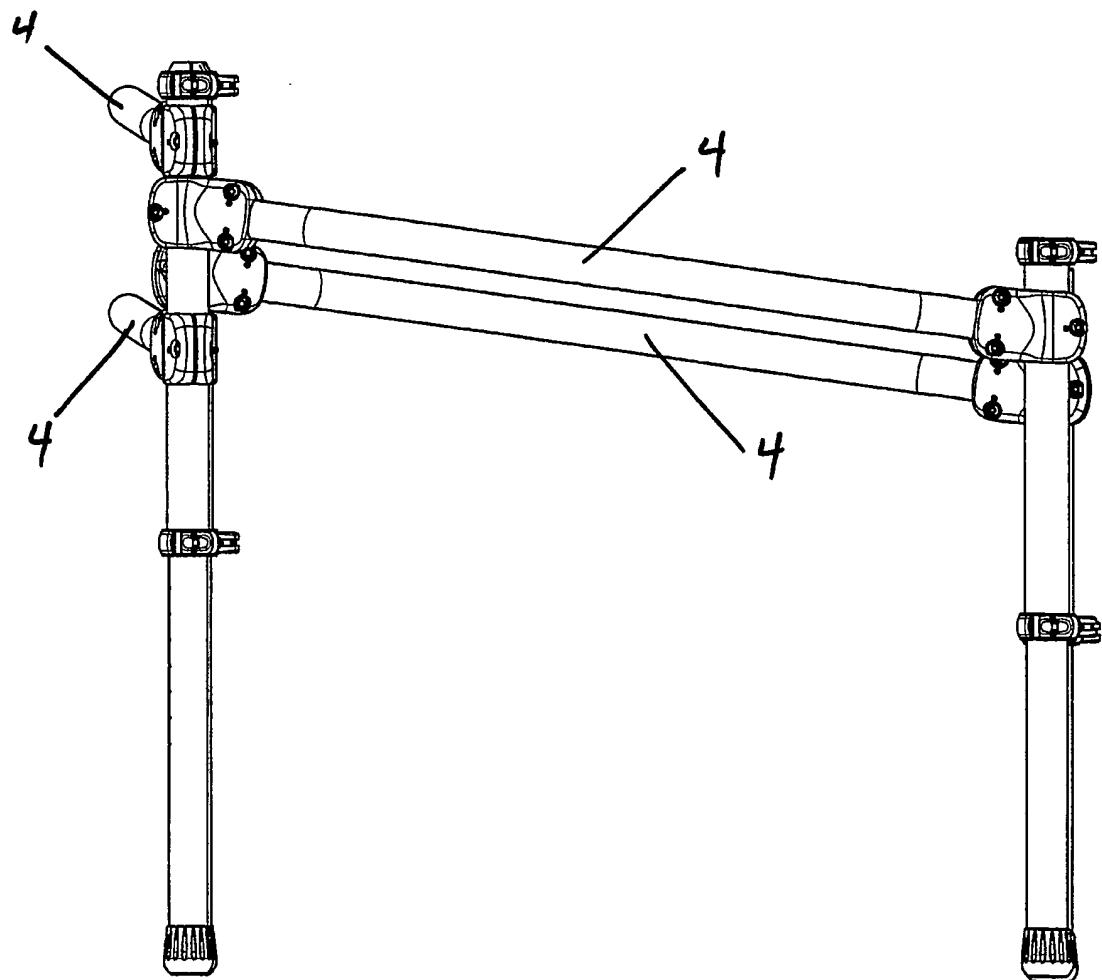


FIG. 1c

**FIG. 2**

**FIG. 3**

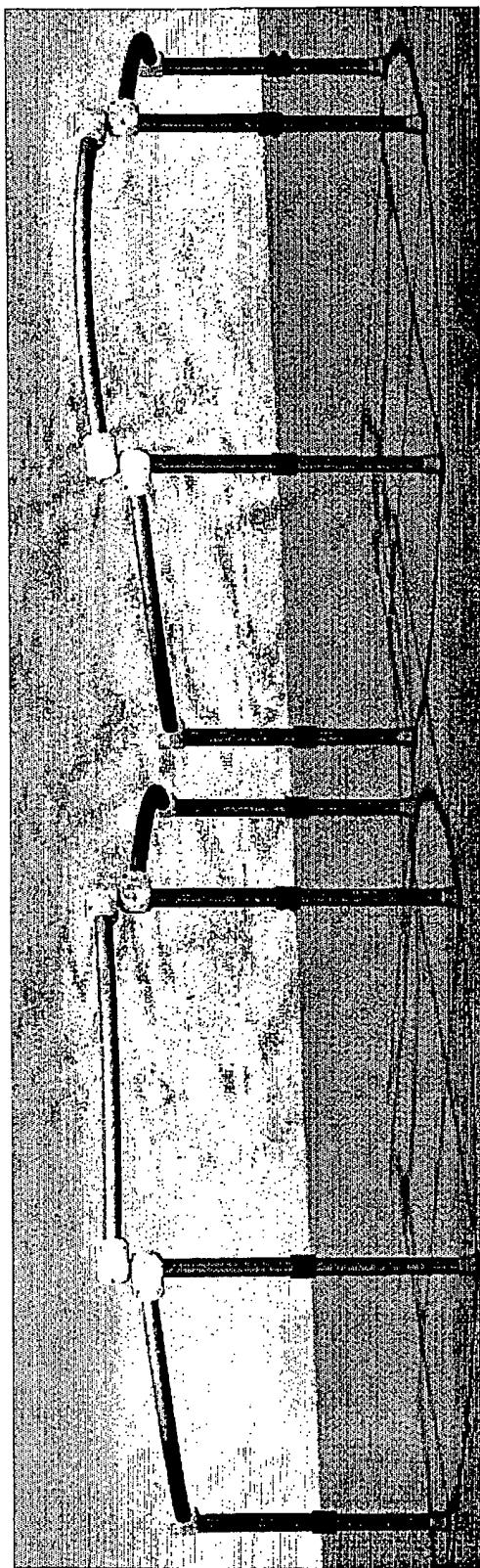


FIG. 4

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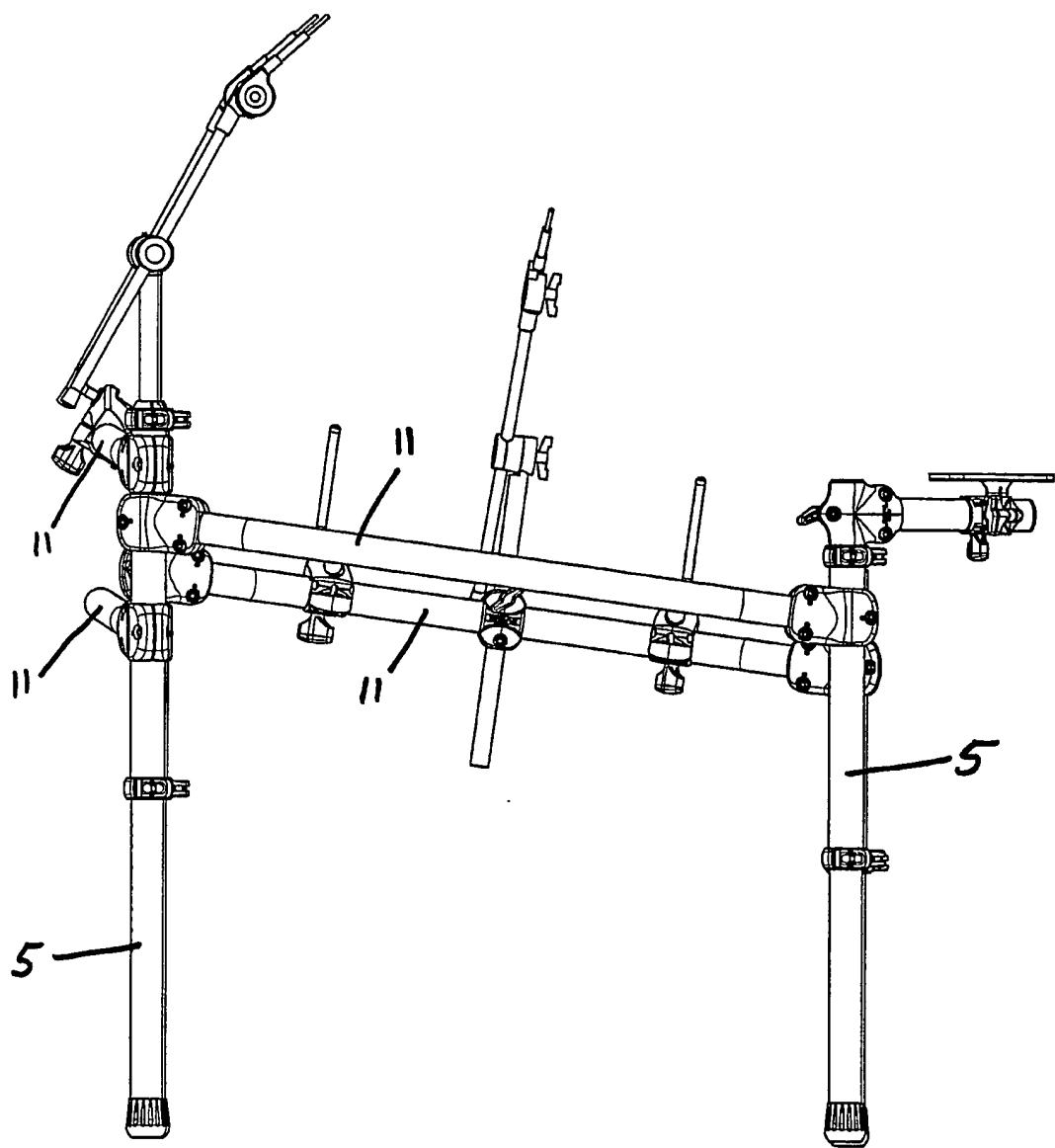


FIG. 5

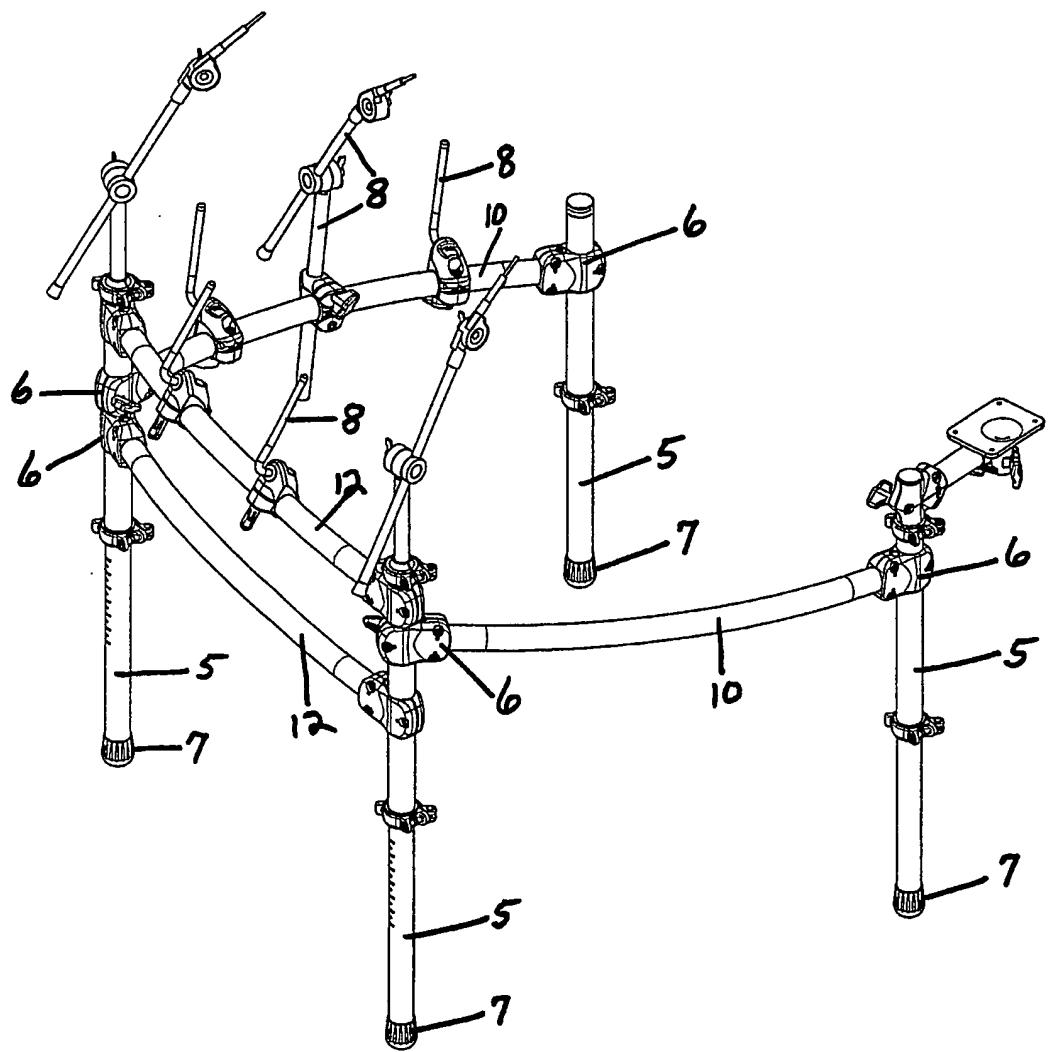


FIG. 6

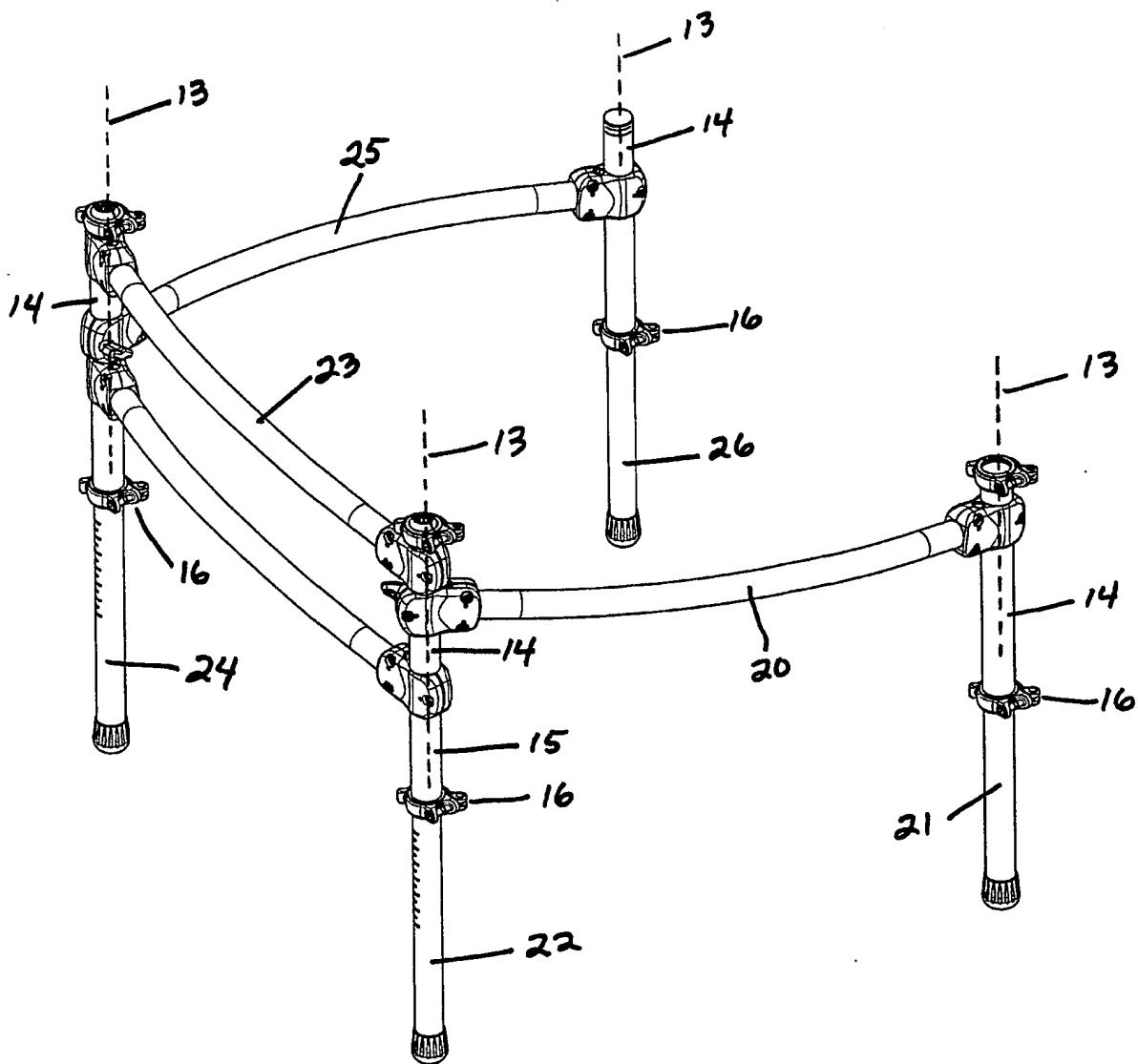


FIG. 7

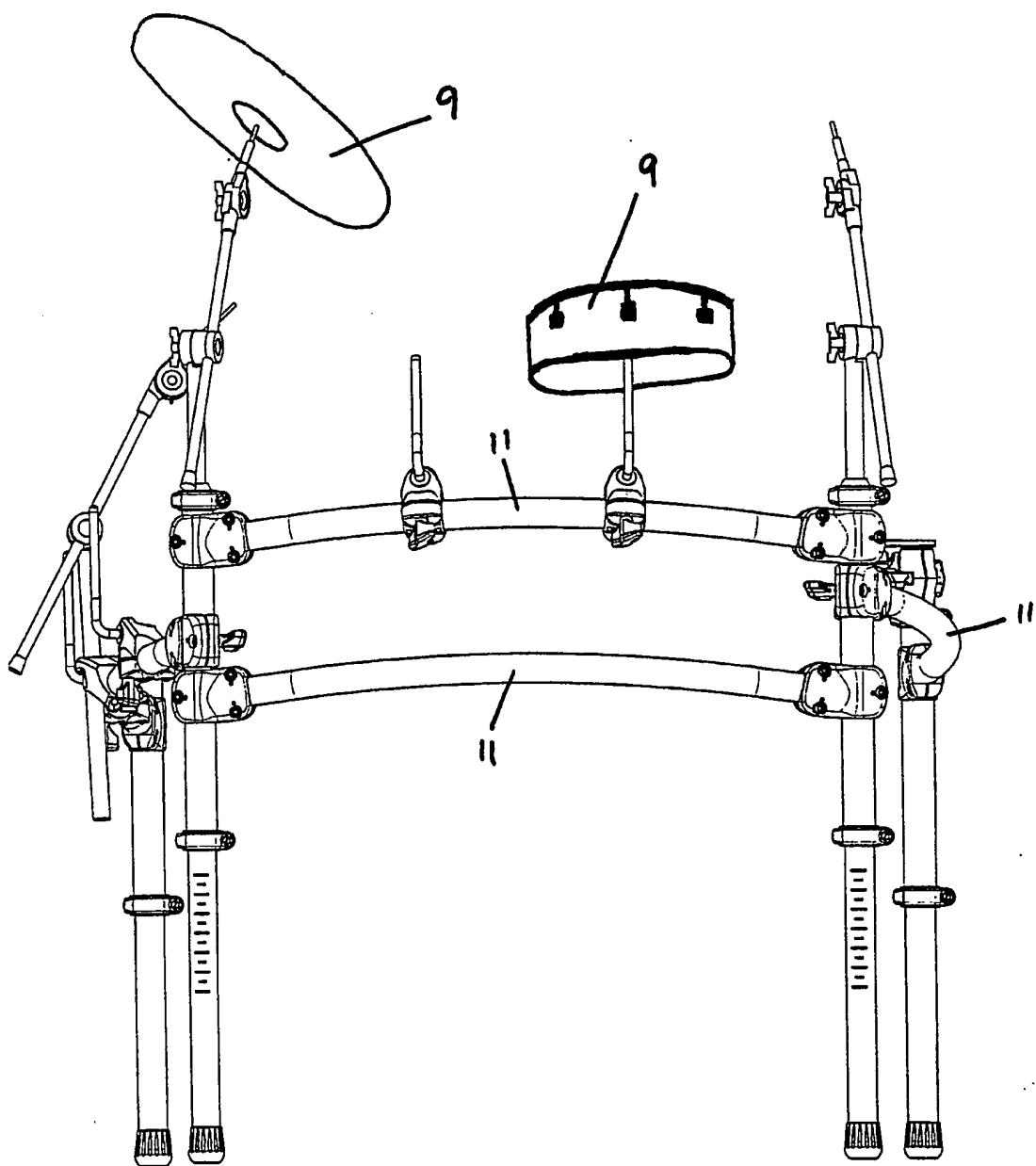


FIG. 8

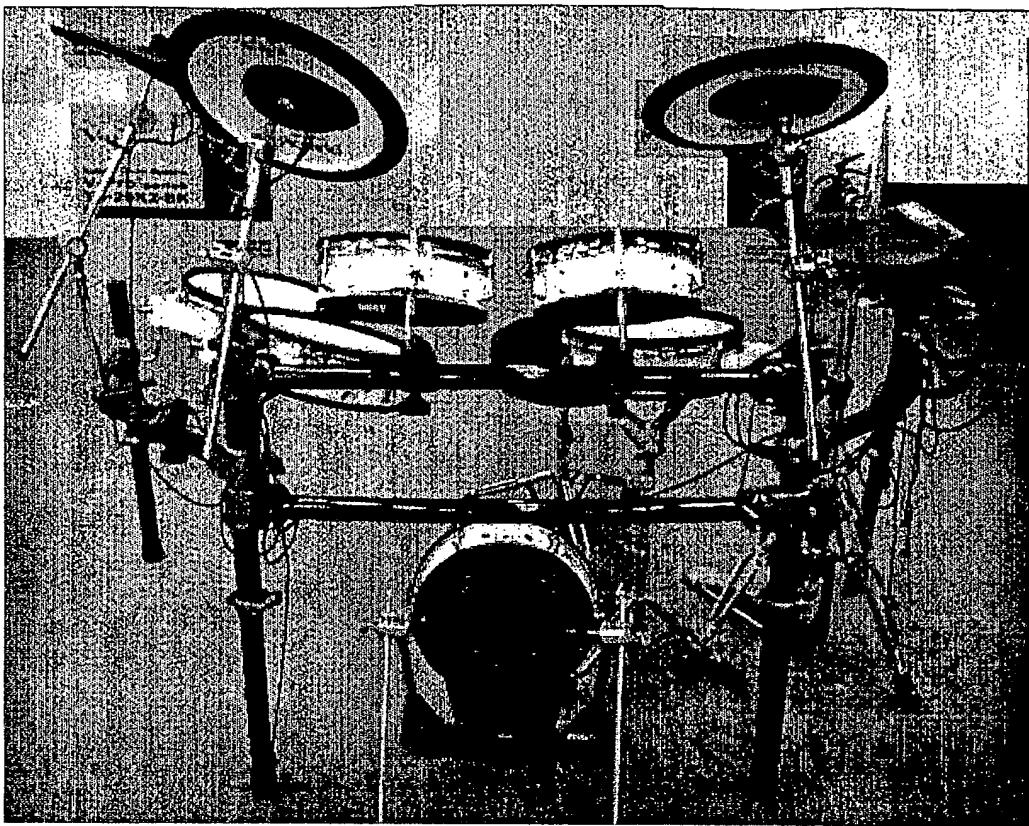


FIG. 9

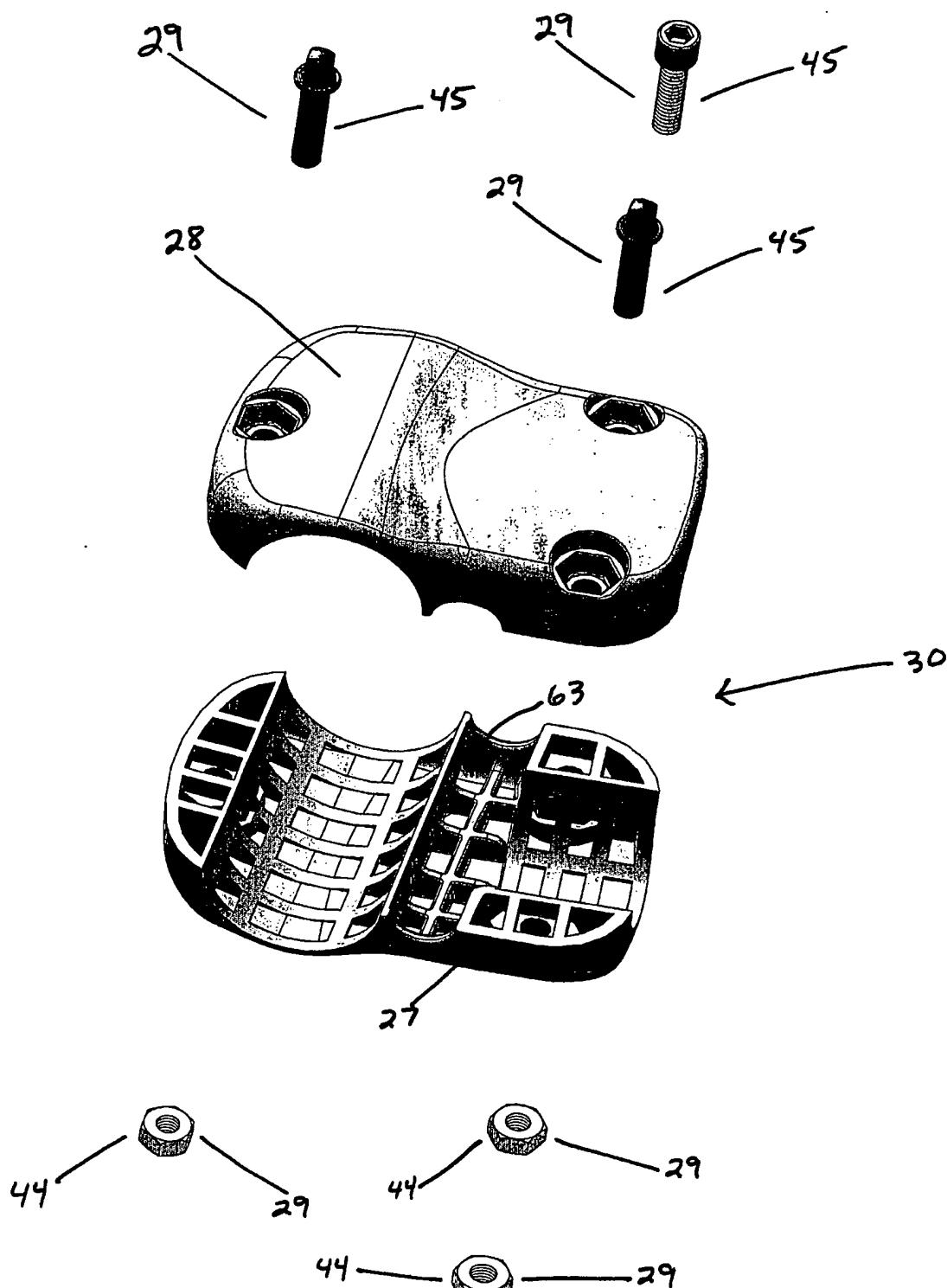


FIG. 10

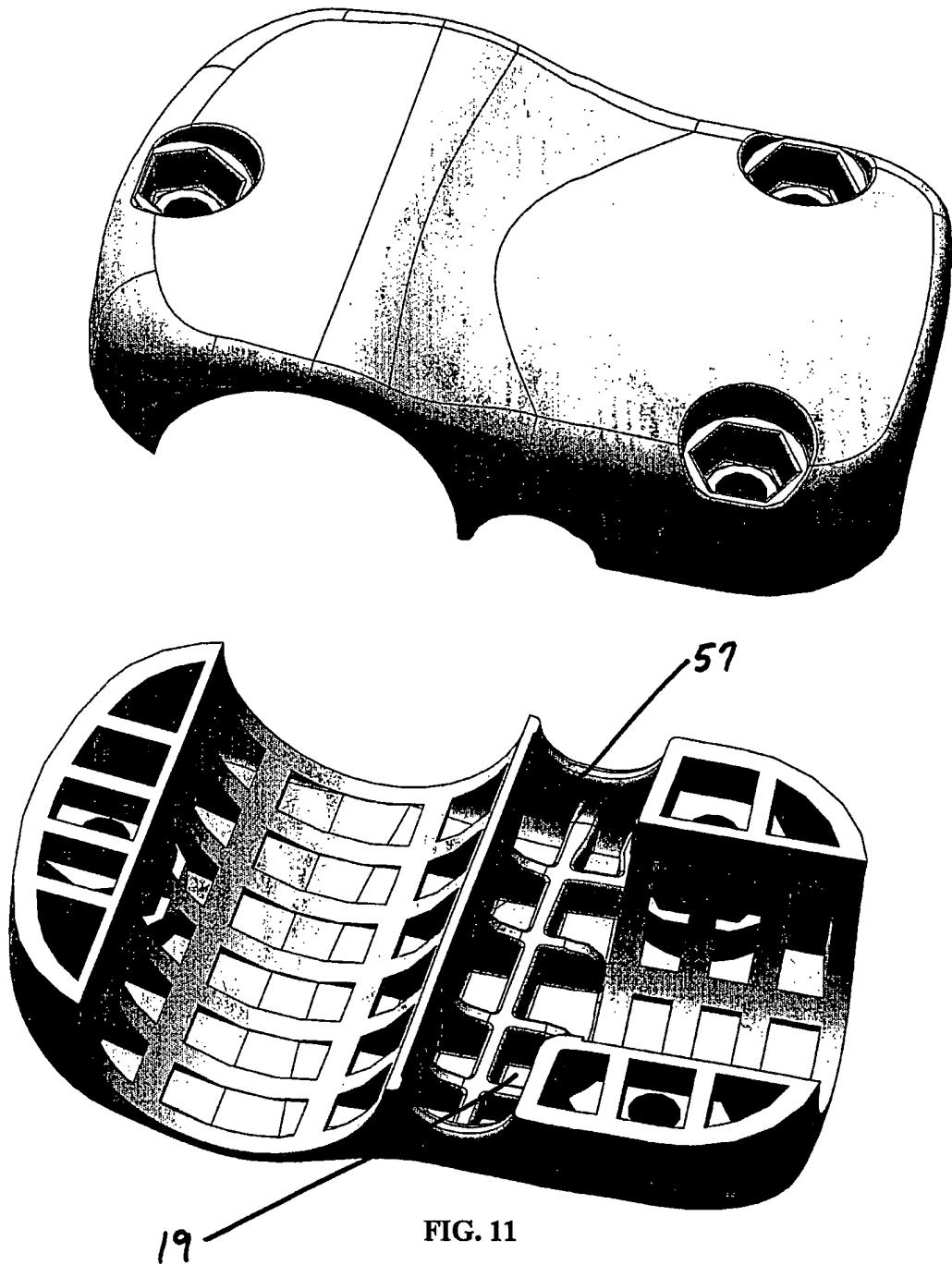


FIG. 11

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FIG. 12c

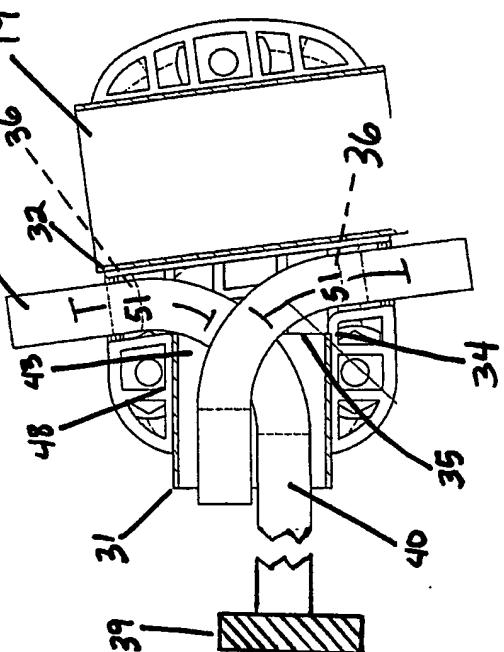


FIG. 12a

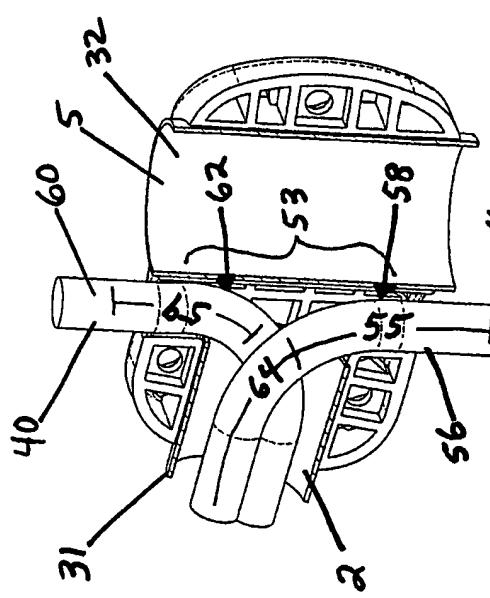
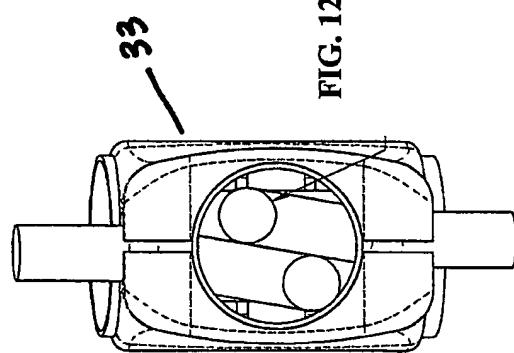


FIG. 12b



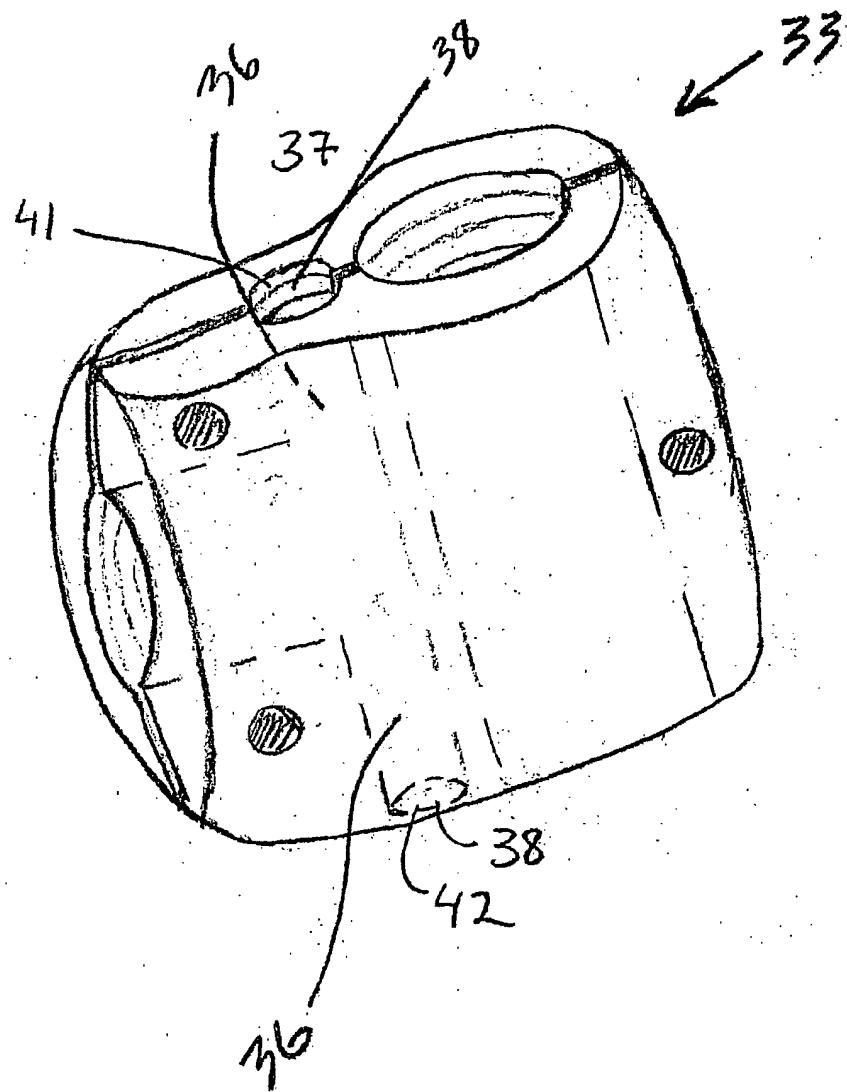
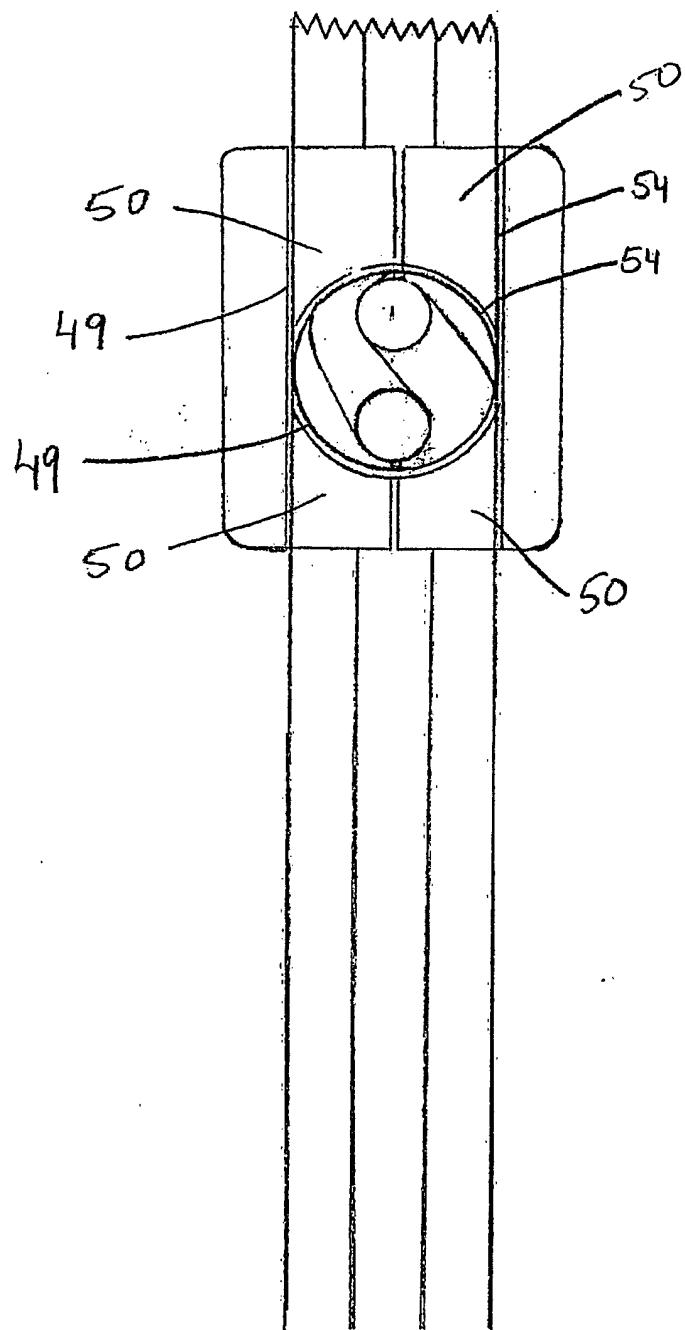


FIG. 13

**FIG. 14**

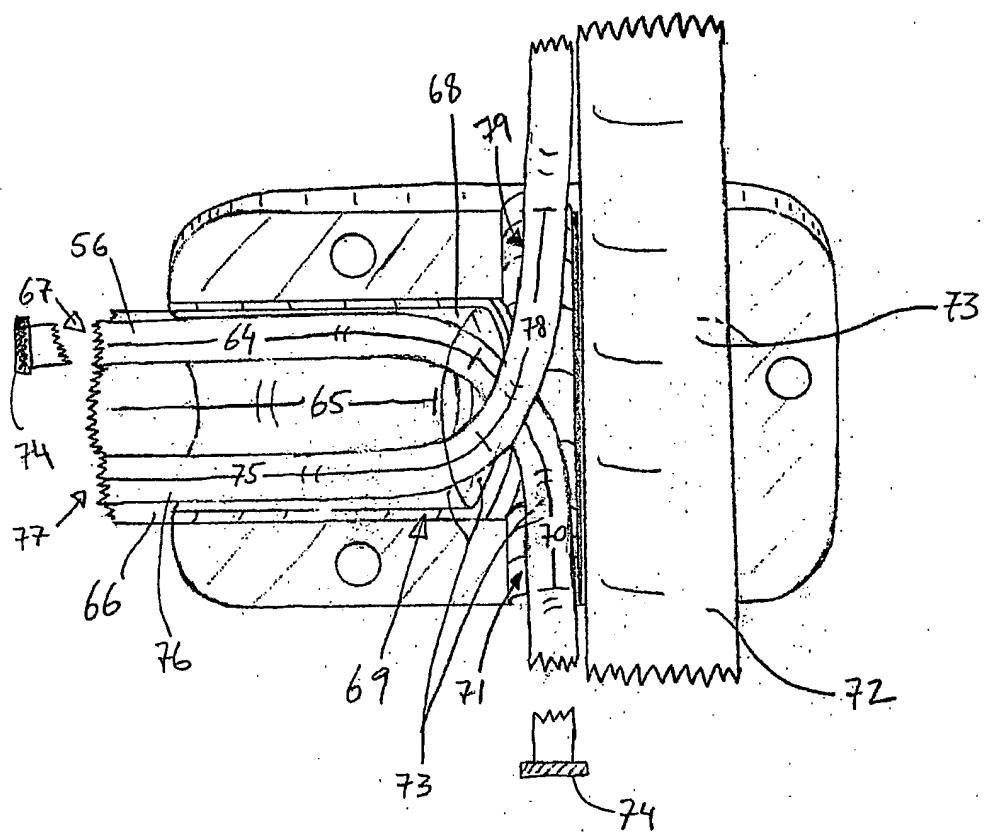


FIG. 15